

my memories of

I.N.A. & Its NETAJI

BY

Maj-Gen. SHAHNAWAZ KHAN

FOREWORD BY

Pt. JAWAHAR LAL NEHRU

RAJKAMAL PUBLICATIONS
DELHI

FIRST PRINTING

"Let our object be our country, our whole country, and nothing but our country And, by the blessing of God, may that country itself become a vast splendid monument, not of oppression and terror, but of wisdom, of peace, and of liberty upon which the world may gaze with admiration for ever" —DANIEL WEBSTER

PRICE RS. 7/8/-

PRINTED BY B DATTA AT THE ALBION PRESS, DELHI,
AND PUBLISHED BY RAJKAMAL PUBLICATIONS, DELHI.

FOREWORD

When we were in Ahmednagar Prison, we had heard vaguely about the formation of an Indian National Army in Malaya We knew very little about it Indeed very few people in India knew much about it at the time Soon after our release from prison in June 1945, I had some further news and particulars about the formation of this Army I was naturally interested, but the Japanese war was going on then and I did not think it proper to say anything in public about what I had heard Soon after the Japanese war ended and I thought the time had come to make public reference to this Army

My knowledge even then was limited and I was not quite sure in my mind as to how far the formation and activities of this Army had been justified, keeping in view the wider scheme of things and the implications of the world war But I had no doubt in my mind even then of two facts—that the men and women, who had enrolled themselves in this Army and worked under Shri Subhas Chandra Bose's guidance, had done so because of their passionate desire to serve the cause of India's freedom, also that if, owing to some technical interpretation of military law, large numbers of them received severe sentences, it would be a tragedy for India It would be a tragedy not only because that might involve the death or long incarceration of brave and vital sons and daughters of India, but also because that would leave a deep wound in the body of India which would take very long to heal That would mean also an intensification of the ill-will against England which was great already It might well be an inseparable barrier between the two countries.

So, quite apart from the political background, I was convinced that everything should be done to save these young men and women I had judged rightly, for immediately there was an amazing reaction in the whole of India and even the remote villages suddenly knew about

the I. N. A. and wanted to do something which might help in effecting the release of the men being tried or imprisoned Those men, whatever they were as individuals, became symbols of India's struggle for freedom and because of this the people of India, with an amazing unanimity, stood by those symbols and sought to protect them. A wave of excitement passed through the land and every other question, more vital in its larger significance, became secondary for the moment The trial of some of these men conducted with great ability by Shri Bhula Bhai Desai held the stage in India and Shri Bhulabhai's final address became a classic.

Public memory is notoriously short and in any event the public mind could not function at that pitch for long. Nevertheless the I N A. made history not only in Malaya and Burma and elsewhere but also in people's minds all over India, and that fact will endure When the passions of the day have cooled down a very objective estimate of the I. N. A. and its leaders and the work it did will be made Many books have already come out on this subject reflecting the excitement of the moment. Perhaps it is too early to survey the work of the I N. A. dispassionately Opinions will differ about the political aspects of much that was done But, however that may be, it is desirable to know the facts atleast My friend and colleague, Major General Shahnawaz Khan of the I N A, has presented these facts in sober fashion, and has thus provided an important record of an important undertaking

I must confess that I have not been able, through lack of time, to read through this record, but I have read parts of it and it seems to me that this account is far the best we have at present. I commend it, therefore, to others and I hope that a reading of it will bring enlightenment about many aspects of this brave adventure JAI HIND.

NEW DELHI,
October 10, 1946.

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

PREFACE

An authentic account of the Indian National Army will constitute a glorious chapter in the history of the struggle for the liberation of India from foreign domination It is abundantly clear that no trial in India either by Court Martial or in the civil courts attracted so much attention as the first I N. A trial After my release, I had an opportunity of travelling a good deal throughout India and every where I went I found the Indian people anxious to know more about the I N. A. and its Netaji. Impelled, therefore, by a burning desire to put down what I knew, I have undertaken to narrate the entire and an absolutely uncoloured story of I. N. A in the method and language of a soldier.

I felt the urgency for this all the more when I saw that some authors both in vernacular and in English in their eagerness to be first in the market, have written books on the I N. A without any real knowledge of that army, with the result that the story remained incomplete and unconvincing. In addition to this there were certain very other important aspects of the I. N. A which were either never touched upon or were only brought out very inadequately during the Court Martial These were the brilliant achievements of our so many thousand brothers who lived, moved and had their being in the Movement during the most fateful and eventful period of three years and eight months, under the inspiring guidance and dynamic leadership of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose The history of these achievements is as fascinating as soul-lifting.

This book would enable people to view the Movement in proper perspective It will dispel many a doubt and many a mistrust which they entertained in their minds This book would also reveal that from time to time it was made clear by people in authority that the plan and the programme of the Independence Movement was

directed to be in line with the aims and intentions of Indian National Congress.

In the pages of this book I have also endeavoured to give my readers an idea of my leader, as a Man, a Statesman and a General.

My grateful thanks are to Sjt. Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru, Vice-President of the Interim Government who has written a Foreword to this book. I am also thankful to Sjt Kalyan Sen, and other nephews and nieces of Netaji for their encouragements to write this book.

I trust the public would read this book with interest

2, WINDSOR PLACE,
NEW DELHI

SHAHNAWAZ KHAN

"NETAJI"

It is indeed a very difficult task, nay almost an impossible one for a humble person like myself to attempt to depict a true picture of Netaji who would certainly go down in history as one of the greatest men India has ever produced.

I have been asked by several friends to give a true picture of Netaji as I saw him The attempt I am making would probably be unworthy of the glory of my great leader. Nevertheless I would request my readers to forgive me for this failing, for Netaji was such a great man and I a humble soldier. How then can I describe him adequately?

I must frankly confess that from the moment I came into personal contact with him he exercised a strange influence over me. Even now I do not know in what proportion the man, the soldier and the statesman in him were blended. At home the man in him seemed to dominate, at the front and in the midst of his troops, the soldier in him shone in splendid glory, and in the councils and conferences and at his desk, as Head of the State of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind, his brilliant statesmanship made a profound impression on one and all of us

As I have described elsewhere I was one of those officers who were brought up in military atmosphere and of loyalty to the British Crown Ever since the start of the first I. N. A, I had been fighting against it, as I felt all along that the Japanese were exploiting us and at heart I was an admirer of the British people. Therefore when Netaji arrived I watched him very keenly What impressed me most about him was his absolute devotion to his country and to secure the independence of India, he was prepared to make any sacrifices. He held the independence of his mother country above everything else in the world.

It is essential to know a man in order to understand his work and I have known Netaji for the entire period he was in East Asia. I was with him in Singapore; then I moved with him to Burma, where we stayed together for nearly a year and a half. It is beyond my power and ability to describe one who was so unique in his qualities. All his qualities are abundantly clear from the respect he received from Indians in East Asia His was a personality which captivated every one who met him, even foreigners. It was he and he alone who welded all Indians in East Asia into one unit, and it was he who created a feeling of friendship and harmony among the nations of the East and his people. He was greatly loved and esteemed not as a sacred diety but as a man, as a hero, as a friend, and as a comrade. What was the secret of this abounding love and profound respect which the masses had for him? Why was he acclaimed as the undisputed leader of Indians in East Asia ? It was because he was a man of courage, character and generous impulses.

As a man he was a good friend and kind companion. He was the leader of Indians in East Asia and yet he was unassuming. He lived a very austere life, he worked very hard, and shared with his comrades their sufferings. He took great care that every one of his comrades were cared for. He went into the details of every matter big or small, and took pleasure in helping the needy. He despised pomp and grandeur.

At first we were sceptical about Netaji's relations with the Japanese. We had seen how they had behaved with the people of Malaya and Burma and quite frankly we did not trust them. They also behaved in an unbecoming and rather a treacherous manner with Gen. Mohan Singh. We were anxious to see how they would behave towards Netaji and how he would react to their behaviour. Very soon we found out that Netaji was not the person who would ever bow down before any one or sell the honour of his country for any price.

His frankness was another quality which won the hearts of his officers and men alike. One day, some officers asked Netaji to

explain to us exactly where we stood with the Japanese He told us that as far as the Japanese were concerned, they realised that as long as the British held India, and could use it as a base of supply and operation against the Japanese, the Japanese Empire could never be safe, and that, in their own interests the Japanese must drive the British out of India, otherwise they themselves would be driven out of East Asia He said that the Japanese, by assisting us were doing no favour to Indians We were helping them as much as they were helping us. We had a common aim in as much as we both were interested in driving the British out of India, the Japanese for their own safety and we for the independence of our motherland. He said that quite frankly he did not trust the British nor did he trust the Japanese He went on to say that where it was the question of the independence of ones' country one could trust no one and, as long as we were weak we would always be exploited. Netaji said that the surest guarantee against being betrayed by the Japanese was to build up our own strength He said that we should ask for no safeguards from the Japanese, our surest safeguard must be our own strength, and if on going into India, we found that the Japanese wished to replace the British, we should turn round and fight them too. At several lectures at mass meetings Netaji repeated this. He warned his soldiers that any one who joined the I.N.A. should come prepared, first to fight the British, and then, if necessary to fight the Japanese too. Although we had a common strategy with the Japanese Army, we had our own independent sectors of the front, where the I.N A. sectors units operated entirely by themselves There was no Japanese central direction within the I N A. Some critics of the I N A. used to say over the All India Radio that since it was working in cooperation with the Japanese it was a "puppet" force. Netaji's reply to this was that the British and French Armies were fighting under exactly the same conditions in France under the command of Gen. Eisenhower. If the British could accept the strategy dictated by the Americans, then how could they criticise the I N A ?

Netaji was absolutely selfless and he never appeared to have

any personal ambitions This was very well demonstrated at a Conference of the Greater East Asia Nations, when Premier Gen. Tojo said in a speech that Netaji would be all in all in Free India Netaji stood up and told Gen Tojo that he had no right to make such a statement because it was entirely up to the people of India to decide who would be who in India He told him that he was only a humble servant of India and the people who really deserved to be all in all in India, were Mahatma Gandhi, Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad, and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru

For him there were no religious or provincial differences He refused to recognise these He looked at everyone— Hindu, Muslim and Sikh—without distinction and his spirit animated his men In the I N A there was no "communal" feeling of any sort inspite of the fact that every men had full liberty to practise his religion in any way he liked He made his soldiers realize that they were the sons of the same motherland, and, as such, there could be no differences between them We were all completely united and it was realized by us that the communal differences in our country were the creation of an alien power The success of this can be gauged from the fact that the most ardent supporters and admirers of Netaji were to be found among Muslims Netaji respected every man for what he was worth and not for his religion or the province he came from

It is amazing to see that when Netaji selected one officer from Germany to accompany him during his most hazardous journey to Tokyo by submarine, it was Abid Hussain, a Muslim, that his choice fell upon

Again, when his troops were sent to the fighting line both the Divisional Commanders were Muslims—Major Gen. M. Z Kiani and myself When he went on his last trip to Tokyo by plane in August 1945, it was Col Habibur Rehman that he selected to accompany him This feeling was not confined only to the members of the army Among the civilians, some of the greatest supporters of Netaji were also Muslims It was one Mr Habib, a wealthy merchant of Rangoon, who gave all his property amounting to nearly one crore

of rupees for one garland belonging to Netaji It is on account of these facts that we of the Azad Hind Fauj refuse to believe that it is not possible for all Indians to unite and live together like brothers and sisters and work for creation of a great, free, and united India.

He made us realize that we were an army of the starving millions fighting for a very sacred cause. It was this elevation in the character of his soldiers that enabled them to face hardships and fight against almost impossible odds

He had no private life as such He used to work from the early hours of the morning till about 2 a m daily. At home, he was a most charming personality and a perfect host. He would invite officers to come and play badminton with him. Then he would take some of them to his room, give them his own clothes if they did not have a change and very often he would hold soap or towel for an officer who was having a wash.

To all the Rani of Jhansi Girls he was like a father and was always concerned about their welfare and honour. On one occasion one young lady of the Rani of Jhansi on hearing that her husband had been killed fighting on the front, took poison Luckily it was discovered in time and she was saved Netaji detailed two elderly ladies to always accompany her everywhere she went He too, used to send for her and talk to her for hours consoling her like a father

Netaji dearly loved his soldiers and was always most concerned about their welfare He used to go and inspect their kitchens and used to have frequent meals with them. He had issued strict orders that the food cooked for him should be exactly the same as was given to his soldiers He was always a frequent visitor to Hospitals where he used to send special sweets prepared for them in his own house

All these qualities and the refusal to bow before the Japanese wishes, his sincerity and devotion to his country, his selflessness and his love of his soldiers greatly endeared him to his followers and every one of them felt that Netaji was his personal friend and leader for whom it was a privilege to lay down his life.

Every day he used to listen eagerly to the news from India,

and when he knew of the terrible famine in Bengal which was taking a heavy toll of valuable human lives, Netaji was greatly perturbed. He was always thinking how he could come to the aid of his starving countrymen, especially the people of Bengal for whom his heart bled. Eventually, he made arrangements for purchasing 100,000 tons of rice from the Siamese and Burmese Governments He then made an offer of sending this rice to Calcutta under his own arrangement and asked the British to give a guarantee for the safe return of boats and ships bringing rice to India As he had expected, the British did not reply to this offer. Netaji repeated this offer several times but the British who were not interested in the million that were starving gave no reply

On another occasion the Japanese Chief of the Gen. Staff came to Netaji and revealed his plan of bombing Calcutta and wanted to know Netaji's opinion on it Netaji replied that as far as he was concerned he would never like to see his beautiful city with ugly scars of bombing. "Encouragement and hope is what I wish to give to my people and not devastation and sufferings" He advised the Japanese to withhold the bombing of Calcutta "After Imphal is captured, we will send over Calcutta large formations of Bombers, which will drop not bombs but thousands of Tricolours to the people of Bengal". "That" Netaji continued, "would destroy the British Imperialism more effectively than bombs."

Netaji was an astute student of International politics He always played a right card at the right moment, and thus scored over his opponents Some times we were stunned by his masterly discourse on the International situation In most cases his analysis of the situation turned out just as he had predicted it to us. He was not only the leader of Indians in East Asia but he was acclaimed as the Leader of all people in East Asia. His was the most impressive personality during the Greater East Asia Conference, and he was requested by the Japanese Government to speak to the Japanese people at Habiya Park in Tokyo It was a real honour, an honour which very few foreigners were accorded, especially at

the time when the Japanese were at the height of success and glory. I was told by a few high ranking Japanese Officers that Netaji was a master mind He was far more experienced than any other statesman in East Asia. I accompanied him to several meetings and parties and one could easily judge his towering personality and vast experience among the other statesman

Indian politics was at his finger tips He knew men and the Indian leaders and thus he could visualize with ease, the means and ends of all matters which took shape in this country. It was a difficult problem to co-operate with the Japanese militarists and especially at the time when every thing was moving in their favour but Netaji handled everything so well and so diplomatically that there was never a time when any serious breach occurred, although the lower ranking Indian Officers and the Japanese were always at loggerheads. As a matter of fact our boat of State was almost always in rough water, but its smooth sailing and success was mainly due to its skipper Netaji. I tried to study him and his methods and found him extraordinarily shrewd Japanese Militarists wanted to help us but at the same time they wanted to influence our actions which were resented all along After the arrival of Netaji, however, the position changed, and thereafter, the Japanese Militarists were influenced by Netaji to such an extent that no new move was made without consulting him and without his advice. The sudden change in the Japanese policy of domination in China to the policy of friendship was entirely due to his influence Some of the Burmese, Chinese and Japanese Statesman used to approach him for advice on matters of international politics. He was the champion of all dependant people in East Asia.Greatness is inborn, it is seldom created, and thus, to utilise the inborn qualities to achieve more purpose he must nourish many other auxiliary and supplementary qualities to fit in with the course adopted. Netaji went through the whole course with flying colours. He kept above board all along and thus traversed the course of greatness without any difficulty He advised all the leaders in the far east and could explain with ease the mischievous propaganda of the British in those days.

Netaji's most extraordinary move was the formation of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind It was a master move in the game of international politics The original Indian Independence League could not freely declare war on their enemies and could not cooperate on equal terms with the League of East Asiatic Nations It was Netaji who foresaw the necessity of equality and thus he declared the inauguration of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind The Officers and workers remained the same but this switch over carried us overnight to the status of a free state and since then the Provisional Government of Azad Hind was recognized by nine sovereign states as an equal partner in the comity of those nations We were a refugee Government but our privileges and status was no less than that of any of the Sovereign states there

At one time the Japanese suggested to Netaji that since the Japanese Army was a senior army, when I N.A. and Japanese officers of equal rank meet, Indian Officers should salute first Netaji was furious at this He said that would mean that the I.N A had accepted an inferior status, which he was not prepared to do He said they both should salute at the same time This was accepted by Japanese

In addition to this the I N A was the only army in East Asia which was not under the Military law of the Japanese. Several times the Japanese approached Netaji and told him that the I N A should also be subject to the Japanese Military Law Netaji refused staunchly. He told them that the I N.A was an independent army. This matter had ultimately to go to Tokyo, where Netaji had his way Whenever the occasion arose Netaji made it absolutely clear that he would fight only for the independence of India and would never allow itself to be exploited by the Japanese There were two occasions when the Japanese approached the I N A to fight for them, once in August 1944, against the Siamese in the area of Chumpong where a small Japanese force was besieged by the Thais (Siamese), and a second time against the Burmese army in March 1945, after the Burmese National Army had rebelled against the Japanese On

both these occasions, with the approval of Netaji, the I N.A. refused to take any action against them.

To keep up our end, Netaji never asked for any facility from Japan which could be provided by the Indians in the Far East Netaji was approached on this point but he refused to accept any assistance other than the supply of war material He told the Indian people that he did not want to approach any one as long as they could help themselves It was for this sincerity that the Indian people showered everything upon him—man-power, money and material wherever he went Several Indians in the East had brought into practice the slogan of total mobilization It is seldom, if ever, that people sacrifice their all for the course of which the end is uncertain but Indians of all castes and creed threw in their lot with Netaji and were ready to give whatever was asked from them.

Netaji by organizing Indian Independence League all over East Asia was able to instil a spirit of patriotism in the heart of every Indian, rich and poor alike, and from whom voluntary contributions flowed in freely. As I have mentioned already a large number of Indians among whom were included members of almost every community, gave their all to the Azad Hind Fauj and became 'Fakirs' for the sake of their country. Whole families joined the I N. A, father the I N A Fauj, mother Rani of Jhansi Regiment and little children Balsena "*Karo sab nichawar, Băno sab Fakir*" was the slogan that Netaji gave them and men like Habib Betai, Khanna and numerous others willingly gave all their fortunes amounting to several lakhs to the Azad Hind Govt and became fakirs A total sum of 20 crores was collected and deposited in the Azad Hind Bank Rangoon.

Rich and moneyed people were not only ones that contributed In fact the greater proportion of our funds was donated by comparatively poor people It was always the poor labourers, Gwalas, and others like them that made the greatest sacrifices.

I should never forget a scene that I witnessed at one of the meetings addressed by Netaji at Singapore.

After Netaji had finished his speech, he made an appeal for funds. Thousands of people came forward to donate. They formed a queue in front of Netaji, each one coming up on his turn, handed over his donation to Netaji and left. Most of the people who formed the queue were donating large amounts. All of a sudden I saw a very poor labourer woman go up to the stage to hand in her donation. She was in tatters and had even no cloth to cover her head. With abated breath all of us watched her. She took out three rupees notes and offered them to Netaji . . Netaji hesitated. She said Netaji "Please accept these This is all I possess" Netaji still hesitated Then great big tears rolled down his cheeks He extended his hand and accepted the money from her

After the meeting was over I asked Netaji why he had hesitated to accept the money from that poor woman and why he had cried Netaji replied "It was a very hard decision for me When I looked at the condition of that poor woman, I knew that those three rupees were all the wealth that she possessed and if I took it she would probably suffer terribly but on the other hand when I thought of her sentiment, her desire to give her all for Indian freedom, I felt that if I refused she would feel hurt and probably think that I accepted only large sums from the rich In the end in order not to hurt her feelings I accepted the money and to me those three rupees have a greater value than lakhs contributed by rich man out of their million"

He was absolutely fearless and did not seem to care for his life, or comfort He seemed to lead a charmed life for I have personally seem him miss death by inches several times and it is on account of that belief that I can never believe that Netaji is dead. . ."Netaji Zindabad".

ORIGIN OF THE AZAD HIND FAUJ

It was in January, 1944, on a beautiful moonlit night that Netaji invited some officers to dinner. We were all sitting out in the porch and Netaji was in a particularly pleasant and conversational mood All of a sudden one inquisitive young officer asked Netaji, how the idea of escaping from India and raising the I N A. had occurred to him; and how our present armed struggle outside India would be viewed by Mahatma Gandhi. Netaji replied that after 1935, it should have been quite evident to any clear-sighted person that a world conflict was fast approaching He said that it was known to him that in the event of England being involved in such a conflict, India would automatically be dragged into it, and that as soon as hostilities commenced all Indian political leaders would be clapped in jail, where they would stay for the duration of the war

"The choice before me", he said, " was that of being imprisoned for the duration of the war or of escaping from India, joining hands with the enemies of England and through their help raising an army to fight for India's liberation." He explained that it was not easy to choose between the two alternatives, and that, before he finally made up his mind, he discussed with Mahatma Gandhi the world situation and the part to be played in it by India. He pointed out to Mahatma Gandhi, that it would serve no useful purpose if Indian leaders were shut up inside jails for the duration of the war, and that the only way in which India's liberation could be achieved was for some Indian leaders to escape, raise an army outside India and then invade India as an army of liberation Netaji explained that in saying so, he had before him the examples of Garibaldi and Gen Franco

Mahatmaji replied that he personally did not believe that it was possible to secure India's liberation by these methods If,

however, Netaji succeeded in freeing India by these means, he (Mahatmaji) would be the first one to congratulate him Thus, Netaji felt that he had secured Mahatmaji's blessings for an enterprise which Netaji thought would prove successful in freeing India

As was expected at the outbreak of World War II Netaji found himself behind prison bars The first problem for him then was how to get out of the prison Netaji said that he thought over it for several days and finally decided that he would go on hunger strike as a protest against his illegal detention He knew that having once started the fast, there would be no going back for him, and if the British persisted in detaining him he would have to starve himself to death like Jatin Das Knowing the British as he did, he felt that there was an even chance that he may have to starve to death "Anyhow", he said "I took the plunge and went on hunger strike". For the first few days the British authorities were adamant and it looked as if they would never give in The jail Superintendent approached him and pointed out to him the futility of such a move. But Netaji would pay no heed to him, and after a fast lasting 12 days his condition became very grave which alarmed the British Jail who finally released him and Netaji returned to his ancestral home Once back home Netaji began to prepare for his next move—that of escaping from India to one of the Axis countries.

The house in which he was residing was under the closest watch of the C.I.D. and local police It is un-officially learnt that there were as many as 62 men of various police departments who were detailed to keep watch over him He shut himself up in his bedroom for several days and allowed no one except a young niece to enter it occasionally to serve his meals. Even his bedroom, it is learnt, he divided into two parts. One was curtained off as his prayer room and the other portion was used as his bed and dining-room. He rarely came out of his prayer room Finally, how unnoticed he escaped from his house by completely deceiving the guards and reached Afghanistan must, for the time being, remain a mystery.

Finally, with the help of the German Counsul in Afghanistan, Netaji managed to reach Germany, where he met Hitler and discussed the possibility of forming an army of Indians residing in German-occupied territory and from among the Indian prisoners of war Early in January, 1942, Netaji raised the first battalion of the Free India Legion in Germany.

On the outbreak of hostilities in the Far East between Great Britain and Japan, Netaji met the Japanese Ambassador in Berlin and requested him to advise the Japanese Government in Tokyo to start a similar organization in the Far East, from among the Indians residing in Japanese-occupied territory and the Indian prisoners of war who had fallen into Japanese hands. The Japanese Government liked the idea and started organising an Indian Army in East Asia.

A Japanese Major-General (then Colonel) by the name of Yamamoto, who was an official of the Japanese Embassy in Berlin, kept Netaji informed of the progress of the formation of the I N A. in the Far East, and when finally at the end of May 1943, Netaji arrived at Penang in a Japanese submarine, Major-General Yamamoto who had accompanied him from Berlin, became Head of a Japanese liaison organisation known as the *Hikari-Kikan.*

Thus the original idea of raising an army of free Indians to fight for India's liberation was conceived and given effect to entirely by Netaji

I will now turn to the East and will try and trace as accurately and faithfully as possible the events that led to the formation of the First I N A under General Mohan Singh, its disbandment, and the raising of a second I N A under the Director of the Military Bureau, Major-General (then Lt Colonel) J K Bhonsle, the arrival of Netaji, the part played by the I N A in the operations in Burma and its final surrender to the British forces in Rangoon.

Prelude to the Formation of the I.N.A.

Before dealing with the actual formation of the I N.A. I would

like to explain very briefly the pre-disposing causes which induced Indian officers and men to join it.

Indian Commissioned Officers.

When the Indianization of the Indian army was started and the Indian Military Academy was established at Dehra Dun, the cadets seeking commissions were promised equality of status, pay and allowances, accomodation etc with the British Officers of the Indian Army Actually, none of these promises were redeemed. The I C Os on commission were posted as platoon commanders in the Indian Units, whereas Junior British Officers were commanding companies, in non-Indianized Units.

PAY.—The rates of pay admissible to the I C.Os were much lower than the corresponding ranks of the British officers. The excuses given for different rates of pay was that the British Officers were serving away from their homes.

On arrival in Malaya the I C.Os contended that they too were serving away from their homes, and, therefore, they should draw the same rates of pay as the British Officers. No heed was, however, paid to these grievances. The Indian Commissioned Officers continued to receive a consolidated pay, which as a Lieutenant amounted to approximately Rupees four hundred, whereas his British counterpart received approximately six hundred Even in the same unit when holding a similar appointment, for example, the appointment of Adjutant or Quarter Master, the allowances were different The British Officer received Rupees one hundred for it, where as an Indian Officer was given only Rupees sixty. Thus the British insisted on forcing an inferior status on Indian Officers which they bitterly resented.

CLUBS—Indian Officers were not admitted as members of a large number of clubs in Malaya The British Authorities always impressed upon the Indians that they had come to Malaya to protect the person and property of the inhabitants of Malaya which also included Europeans who refused admission to these protectors to their clubs.

COLOUR BAR.—In Malaya there was an order by the Railway Authorities of Federated Malaya States that an Asiatic could not travel in the same compartment as a European, and the fact that they both held the same rank and belonged to the same unit did not seem to matter in this respect.

(2) *Indian Soldiers*

In Malaya, an Indian Soldier was given only Rupees twenty-five (25/-) per month, whereas a British Soldier was receiving approximately Rs. 75 (Seventy five).

In fighting, the Indian soldiers were more often than not ahead of British soldiers, therefore, this difference in pay was a cause of great discontentment and indignation. In addition to this, there was a vast difference in the food, accomodation, and general treatment between the Indian and the British soldier. The Indian soldier often asked himself why he was being given this stepmotherly treatment inspite of the fact that he was, if anything, a tougher and braver fighter than a British "tommy".

General

On the outbreak of the last war (1939-1945) Indian leaders unanimously declared that the present war was an Imperialist war which Britain was fighting to protect her vested interests, and in such a war India could have no part They demanded that Indian troops should take no part in it, but since they had no control over the army the British used the Indian army as, when and where they liked

To the Indian soldier the British propagandist said that the war was being fought to save democracy and freedom in the world from Fascist aggression In the beginning, the Indian soldier, simple-minded as he was, believed them But gradually he began to doubt the truth of such statements, and when on proceeding overseas, he saw with his own eyes the discriminatory treatment meted out to him, he began to ask himself if it was fair that the people for whose freedom he was fighting should treat him in that manner. It was only then that it dawned upon him that he was a slave fighting to preserve the empire

of his master, and that by his action he was strengthening the chains of imperial slavery.

Thus, by the time the much-boasted "impregnable" fortrees of Singapore fell, the Indian soldier had realized that if he had to fight for democracy and freedom, it was much better to fight for his own democracy and freedom. It was in this mood that fall of Singapore found the greater number of Indian soldiers.

The debacle in Malaya, a brief account of which follows, and the sight of white soldiers fleeing for their lives before the Japanese, an Asiatic nation, further lowered the prestige of Englishmen in the eyes of Indian soldiers and removed all traces of racial inferiority from their minds.

They argued, and quite rightly too, that they were as good soldiers as the British tommies and they had as much right to be free and independent as the Britisher.

Debacle of Malaya.

Inspite of the fact that all Japanese activities prior to the War in the Far East indicated that a war was imminent the British authorities in Malaya—both Civil and Military—had lulled themselves into a false sense of security. Therefore all efforts made for the defence of Malaya were very half-hearted The armed forces available and their equipment were far from adequate for the task allotted to them. On the fall of Singapore, Mr. Churchill made a speech in Parliament in which he explained that Malaya had been starved of men, material —especially air power because of the urgent need of others, and more important theatres of war. When the war did come, it came as a shock to everyone and no one had a chance to recover from this shock until the end of the campaign.

Air Marshall Brooks-Popham, the Commander-in-Chief of British Forces stationed in Malaya, had based the defence of Malaya on a strong airforce dispersed on a series of aerodromes scattered all over Malaya Consequently, the majority of the Military units in the country had also been scattered all over for the defence of these air bases. This enabled the Japanese to defeat these scattered units,

and it was not even possible for the British Commander to marshal enough forces to stem the Japanese advance The essential condition for the success of Brooke-Popham's plan—a strong airforce—was conspicuous by its absence and the plan failed completely.

Most of the British air planes were put out of action in the earlier days of the war and the remainders were forced by the Japanese to remain on the ground Throughout the Malayan Campaign the R A F could not give any support to the land forces. Towards the end of the Campaign about sixty Hurricane fighters arrived in Singapore to reinforce the airforce stationed there but the Island surrendered before they were even assembled and they were presented to the Japanese in their crates

The Naval squadron, after the sinking of its two capital ships —"Prince of Wales" and "Repulse"—was rendered completely useless and except for a minor action off the coast of Marsing, there was no naval activity anywhere off the coast of Malaya.

Owing to the inactivity of air and naval forces, throughout the campaign, the Japanese were able to land troops where ever and whenever they wanted, and were thus able to outflank the retreating British forces.

The land forces in Malaya were wholly inadequate for meeting the Japanese attack They had no armoured units and it was invariably the Japanese tanks that broke through the defences. Most of the units of the army had been mechanized in Malaya but they were not efficient in the use of motor vehicles nor were they very efficient in the use of new weapons issued to them. Most of their time had been spent in building up their defences and they were not trained as large units and formations Their training in jungle warfare had been completely neglected and they were completely "road—bound". The Japanese, on the other hand, were masters in jungle craft and always managed to outmanoeuvre the British forces through jungles which were impassable to the British troops The land forces in Malaya had to fight against much superior Japanese forces for days on

and without any relief or rest, whereas the Japanese were able to employ their troops in twenty-four hours shifts.

Lack of co-operation.

The British civil servants who had ruled in Malaya as tin Gods resented the Military intruders whom they considered to be an unmitigated nuisance. Instead of extending every co-operation to the Military authorities they were invariably a source of hindrance Some instances of their arrogant and obstructionist attitude have already been cited before During the Malayan Campaign it was no un-common sight to see important military trains held up because the civil authorities had made no arrangements for the cooling of the engines, nor could the civil authorities be ever relied upon to provide labour at any time.

There was also a complete lack of co-operation between the three services. The airforce which was supposed to be the kernel of the defence of Malaya considered the army only of secondary importance, which attitude the army naturally resented. After the outbreak of hostilities, the air force disappeared from the scene and became the butt of sarcasm of the army. The naval forces were of such a small consequence that no one bothered about them. Such lack of co-operation was responsible for the tragedy which led up to the sinking of the "Prince of Wales" and the "Repulse".

Racial differences between the Indian, Australian and British forces had become very acute before the outbreak of hostilities, and there had been some instances of armed clashes. These differences worsened during the Campaign and there was more recrimination than co-operation between these armed forces

Poor Leadership

The military leadership in Malaya was very poor indeed. As the Japanese naval convoys approached the coasts of Singapore and Kota Bharu, the brass hats of the British army sat debating in their comfortable offices in Singapore whether the famous "Metador" scheme should be put into operation or not. The Metador scheme was military plan which had been prepared previously

and entailed an advance of British forces into Thailand (Siam). In the end they decided to put into operation a new modified scheme which was neither so bold nor so brilliantly conceived as the Metador scheme, and like all half measures failed completely.

The poverty of the British military leadership was again demonstrated when during the first few days of the war, the British had to dismiss one general and the three brigade commanders under him.

The battle of the "Slim River" was lost due to the inefficiency of the Commander of the 12th Indian Brigade and for the same reason, the Divisional Commander had to be reverted to his original command of a brigade.

Another Brigadier, who had become a mental case when his brigade was smashed by the Japanese, was given the command of another brigade. He allowed his brigade to be badly mauled by the Japanese, by failing to issue orders for withdrawal in time. Later, in Malaya, he was the cause of the 22nd Infantry Brigade being cut off and annihilated by the Japanese. He, too, was sacked on arrival in Singapore.

Singapore Surrender and Indian Morale.

During his stay in Malaya, the Indian soldier found that he was hated by other Asiatics for being a British watch-dog. Under the circumstances, he adopted the only course open to him—a haughty and superior attitude towards other Asiatics. On the fall of Singapore for which he was not even remotely responsible, he found himself in the unenviable position of a defeated soldier in the presence of those whom he had affected to despise. His vanity was hurt and he asked himself the obvious question—why am I placed in such a predicament? The answer was not difficult to find. He knew that it was British incompetence He realised that his humiliation was the result of his fighting Britain's war. Is it any wonder, therefore, that he decided not to continue as a watch-dog of the British any longer?

Throughout the Malayan Campaign the Indian troops, without

any air support, fought courageously against the heavy odds. Time and again they were made victims of blunders committed by their British Commanders, but they patiently and loyally continued to fight while their British Commanders were being taken to safety on the Island fortress of Singapore Tired and weary after their long and hazardous campaign on the mainland of Malaya, the Indian units arrived in Singapore Last to arrive on the Island, they were the first to be sent forward to meet the Japanese onslaughts directed against Singapore Here again, they fought tenaciously when their Australian Comrades were abandoning their positions and running away to take part in the indiscriminate looting and raping that their countrymen had started in the town.

The reward for all this loyalty and courageous fighting came when the British Commander, General Percival, surrendered unconditionally, and without any representation, handed over all the Indian troops to the Japanese

The Indian troops were told to obey the orders of the Japanese in the same way as they had been obeying the orders of the British. The Indians were treated as mere cattle and quite naturally felt deserted by the British for whom they had shed their blood so freely.

The British had, through their clever propaganda, established a legend about the superiority and invincibility of the White people, a legend which the average Indian soldier, quite unconsciously, believed To the Indian soldier the White Sahib could do no wrong. During the battle of Malaya, the same White Sahibs were seen running about in panic trying to save their lives Gone was the dignity and superiority of the White Sahibs The Officer class of the White Sahib did not do much credit to its race either. In battle it is the duty of officers to lead their men, but they were so scared of being captured alive by the Japanese that they always kept well to the rear of their Indian soldiers. The British officers had sufficient reasons for their dread of being captured alive by the Japanese

The Japanese, in order to lower the morale and to shatter the nerves of British officers and men, had resorted to methods which were,

by modern standards of civilization, quite brutal. They would tie captured prisoners to trees and then proceed to bayonet them one by one in the presence of their comrades In some cases, they would ask the Indian prisoners to bayonet their British Officers. Those who refused to do so were themselves bayonetted by the Japanes The Japanese soldiers were trained in such a manner that they took pleasure in this sort of work and treated it as a good pastime. While they were indulging in this sordid sport, the Japanese would release a few of the prisoners who were awaiting their turn to be bayonetted and send them back to the British lines to tell these tales to their comrades and thereby shatter the nerves of British officers and men.

In dealing with Indians, however, the Japanese followed an entirely different technique. Whenever Indian soldiers were taken prisoners, they would either take no notice of them or after disarming them would give them the choice of either staying with the Japanese or going back to the British lines To the captured Indian soldier the Japanese said that they regarded the Indians as brothers and not as enemies, and that, the Japanese were fighting the war to help India to win her independence from the British.

To the Indian soldiers who were held prisoners by the Japanese on the front lines, they generally meted out good treatment. This technique proved effective and appealed to the Indian soldiers, who went over to the Japanese in large numbers.

The ease and speed with which the Japanese defeated the British forces in the Far East broke the legend of British power. The Indians became convinced that the Japanese would ultimately succeed in defeating the British quite easily. This was also true in case of the attitude of Asiatic civilians in Malaya. The British had often boasted of their might and promised to protect them from Japanese domination, but the Malayan debacle convinced them of British impotence.

During the campaign, Singapore became the heaven of dismissed Brigadiers and Commanding Officers, who now sat idling in various headquarters while the troops in the front line paid the price of their stupidity.

The tale of British military leadership is indeed a very sad one, and the debacle of Malaya was mainly due to their muddle-headedness

The majority of the Military units in Malaya were encamped in rubber plantations which produced a very depressing effect. These units or troops had spent all their time in preparing defences and they had acquired a "pill-box mentality", which was a feeling that as long as they held a few strongly built fieldworks and pillboxes, the Japanese could not break through. This led them to believe in rigid defence and they sacrificed flexibility and manoeuvrability for static defence with the result that the Japanese always managed to infiltrate through or outflank British defensive positions.

They put all their faith in the defences which they had constructed through so much hard labour and when they saw the Japanese cutting through them, like a knife cutting through cheese, their morale was shattered On top of this, they had the uneasy feeling of being let down by their commanders. Although the Brass-hats were blissfully ignorant of the disastrous consequences of their muddle-headedness, the common soldier knew that everything was going wrong. Hundreds of men were being sacrificed in futile counter-attacks which gained no tactical advantage. Time and again, well prepared positions were abandoned without any opposition The long trek and continuous fighting without any relief was nerve-racking. Added to all this was the constant menace of enemy air attacks. The first to break down were the British officer who were scared of falling alive into Japanese hands. When the troops saw the officers in such a state, their own morale was completely shattered Once the morale was gone the army became a rable and was incapable of putting up any organized resistance against the attacking enemy. This is the reason why one hundred thousand British troops in Singapore surrendered to 30,000 Japanese

THE INDIAN INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT

Soon after the commencement of hostilities in the Far East, Sri Rash Behari Bose, an Indian revolutionary, who had been living as an exile in Japan, for several years under the patronage of Mr Toyama, well known Japanese patriot called on Field Marshal Sugiyama, Chief of the Imperial General Staff of the Japanese Army, and explained to him that the present war was a good opportunity for Indians to secure their independence from British rule He requested Field Marshall Sugiyama to help Indians in East Asia to organize themselves and launch an armed offensive against the British from the East. He also requested the General Staff to issue orders to Japanese forces not to treat Indians as enemy subjects in the countries occupied by the Japanese armies Sugiyama could not agree with Mr. R. B. Bose's proposal, as he contended that India was a part of the British Empire which was at war with Japan and as such, all Indians were to be treated as enemy subjects.

Mr Bose then met the Deputy War Minister and managed to pursuade him to agree to his suggestion. Consequently, an Indian Independence League, with the object of organizing Indians in the Far East was formed in Japan with Mr. Rash Bihari Bose as its President

After the occupation of Thailand (Siam) by the Japanese forces, Swami Satya Nand Puri, with certain other leading Indians, set up an Indian Independence League in Bangkok. Representatives of this League went with the Japanese forces as they advanced into Malaya and with the help and under the leadership of local Indians set up I.I L Branches in all the state of Malaya Later, the I.I L Branches were formed all over East Asia including Philippines, Thailand, Dutch East Indies, French Indo-China, Shanghai, Burma, Korea and Manchuria All these League branches owed allegiance to India and were under the leadership of Mr. R B, Bose

The formation of these branch organizations was a very wise move on the part of Mr R B Bose The Japanese soldiers let loose an orgy of looting and raping in every territory they occupied. The people whom they termed as "enemy" subjects were the ones who were especially singled out for these barbarities. Europeans, Eurasians, and Chinese were the nationalities that suffered most. Brutal, as the Japanese soldiers were, I will say this much for them that they never molested any Indian woman. In fact, many a Eurasian and Chinese women escaped molestation by putting on sarees and "Du-puttas" and telling the Japanese that they were Indians Apparently some instructions had been issued to the Japanese soldiers not to molest Indian civilians. Inspite of his other draw-backs and failings the Japanese is a very fine soldier and he obeys the orders of his superiors most implicitly. It was a very common sight to see Japanese soldiers approaching Indian houses and trying to talk to the inmates Most of them knew no other language than their own. They would go up to an Indian and say 'Gandhi ka' ? At first we could not understand this, but later we learnt that by this they meant are you a follower of Mahatma Gandhi ? If the reply was in the affirmative they would say 'Ha', shake hands or bow and push off

Captain Mohan Singh

This officer belonged to the 1st Bn. 14th Punjab Regiment which was stationed at Jitra in North Malaya, since the beginning of 1941 On 11th December, 1941, after his Battalion had been in action for a few days, he along with some officers, including Capt Mohd Akram Khan and his commanding officer, Lt Colonel L V. Fitzpatrick were cut off from the rest of the Battalion The commanding officer had been wounded in action and was unable to walk Capt Mohan Singh and Capt Mohd Akram Khan carried him with them for several days, through thick Malayan forests and eventually took refuge in a Mosque at Alorstar By this time the Japanese mechanized columns and men mounted on bicycles, had broken through and were well on their way to Singapore.

At Alorstar Capt Mohan Singh came in contact with one Mr. Pritam Singh, a Sikh revolutionary who had been sent by the Bangkok IIL League to accompany the advancing Japanese troops and Major Fujiwara, a Japanese Officer of the Intelligence Department, who tried to pursuade Gen. Mohan Singh to join the IIL After a prolonged discussion, Capt. Mohan Singh agreed to join the Indian Independence Movement and to cooperate with Japanese forces

Prior to the surrender of Capt. Mohan Singh, the Japanese had captured Capt Pattanayak, an Indian Medical Service Officer, and had similar discussions with him and had asked him to organize the Indian soldiers to fight for India's Independence Capt Pattanayak had expressed his inability to do so, as he was a Medical man. He was severely slapped and beaten by the Japanese for not possessing sufficient patriotic fervour

Capt Mohan Singh, realizing the heavy odds against which the Indian army was fighting and the helplessness of the Indian civilians in Malaya left in the lurch by their White Masters, decided that the best course would be to cooperate with the Japanese forces and save as many Indian lives as possible and to provide protection to the Indian civilian population of Malaya In pursuance of this decision he organised a small group of officers and men of the Indian Army to work under his command To this group he gave the name of "Fujiwara Kikan (Department)". These Indian volunteers advanced along with Japanese troops and helped in the collection of Indian soldiers, providing food for Indian civilians, giving aid to the sick and wounded and organising search parties to bring back wounded and stragglers left behind in the jungles.

Collection centre for Indian soldiers was formed in Kuala Lumpur, and about 5,000 Indian soldiers were collected in a camp in the city and arrangements were made for their feeding and accomodation. Rations and medicines were provided by the local Indian civilians The Japanese gave no help with regard to rations, medicines, clothing etc The Indian troops had to fend for themselves and exist as best as they could Parties were sent out to collect rations, medicines,

clothings and whatever else they could get from abandoned British camps and supplies and from the local civilians. The lot of the Indian prisoners at Kualalumpur was not happy one, and for months they lived a hand-to-mouth existence In those dark days at Kuala Lumpur Capt. Mahboob Ahmed of the 1/13th Frontier Force Rifles and Capt. Talibuddin I.M.S. worked day and night and managed to collect a fair quantity of rations, clothing and medicines and opened a hospital for the Indian soldiers.

From the civilians, one Sikh gentleman by the name of Budh Singh devoted all his time and energy for the relief and assistance of Indian soldiers, and as usual the best response in aid of these Indian soldiers of misfortune came from the very poorest classes of labourers.

Nucleus of the I N A

About the middle of January, 1942, Capt. Mohan Singh explained his aims and objects to the Indian soldiers in Kuala Lumpur main camp He said that an "Indian National Army" should be formed from amongst the Indian soldiers with the object of actively fighting the British in Malaya and elsewhere. He explained that the eventual object of the I. N. A was to drive the British out of India and that the Japanese had promised to give all possible aid to Indians to secure the liberation of their country from British domination He thereupon asked for volunteers with the object of forming two groups —one group to participate actively in the fighting in Malaya and the other one to be sent for action in Burma Eventually these groups were raised—each one numbering two hundred strong—and took part in the Malayan and Burma campaigns. The Malayan group was commanded by Capt. Allah Ditta Khan, 22 Mt Regt and was among the very first troops to land on the Island of Singapore The Burma groups was commanded by Major Ram Sarup 4-19th Hyderabad Regt. and took part in the fighting in Burma. Major Ram Sarup proved himself to be an officer of out-standing gallantry and tact. And, by his influence with the Japanese he managed to save the lives of a very large number of Indian soldiers and secured preferential treatment for Indian civilians residing in Burma



Shri RASH BEHARI BOS
The Founder of Indian Inde-
pendence Movement in Ea
Asia.

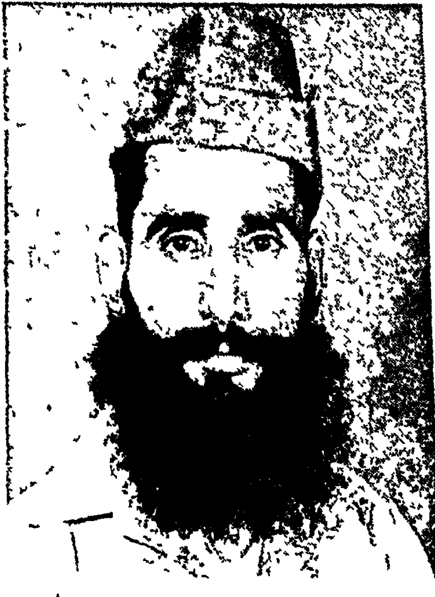


GEN MOHAN SINGH
Supreme Commander First
I N A

Commanded Parwana Coy at Haka in April 1944.



Shaheed Capt. Amrik Singh
Sardar-e-Jang.



Major Suraj Mull
Sardar-e-Jang.

Who commanded even the Japanese troops and guarded the National flag at Mowdok

preferential treatment for Indian civilians residing in Burma

Political lectures and dramas were inaugurated to infuse a spirit of patriotism and nationalism among the Indian soldiers in Kuala Lumpur. All superficial differences of class, creed and religion were abolished, and all men lived and ate together in harmony.

Surrender of Singapore

Johore Causeway connecting Singapore Island with the main-land, was destroyed by the British on the morning of the 31st January, 1942, after all available troops had been withdrawn into the island The majority of the Indian troops in Singapore had already participated in the strenuous campaign on the mainland of Malaya and were thoroughly exhausted mentally and physically Immediately on arrival on the Island the same troops were put on to be prepared and man the defences of the Island This was a great disillusionment to all, as lavish promises of rest and reinforcements had been made to them The general morale of the army and the civilians from the highest to the lowest was very low There was a general feeling among all the Asiatics that they were being given a raw deal by the British, and the failure of the British to evacute Asiatic civilians from the mainland of Malaya was also ranking in their hearts Added to all this was the feeling that the British distrusted every Asiatic and suspected him of being in league with the Japanese forces

The Japanese made their initial landing on the 8th of February, 1942, and after bitter fighting the British forces unconditionally surrendered to the Imperial Japanese Army on the 15th of February

Surrender ond Concentration at the Farrer Park.

On the night of the surrender 15-16 Feb 1942, we received orders that all Indians including the N C Os were to concentrate in the Farrer Park All British officers and other ranks were to con-centrate at Shanghai All of us, especially the officers, were surprised to hear this order because according to the laws of warfare all captured officers whether Indian or British are kept together and separate from the Rank and file We had heard of Japanese methods

and atrocities before and felt that our British brother officers were leaving us in the lurch to face it all by ourselves

On the following morning when we were marching off to our concentration areas our commanding officers Major Macadam, along with other British officers came to see off the Battalions. While shaking hands with me he said, "I suppose this is the parting of our ways" At the time I did not understand the full significance of this, as I had no idea of Japanese intentions, whereas he must have known about it when he made the remark. Uptil that time most of us did not know anything about the activities of Capt Mohan Singh on the mainland of Malaya and his intention of raising an I.N A The higher British officers were however, fully aware of it, but they kept it a closely guarded secret, with the result, that when we concentrated at the Farrer Park we did not know what to expect there

Handing over Ceremony.

At the Farrer Park at about 2 P M on the 17th Feb 1942, Lt Colonel Hunt, a staff officer of the British Military Headquarters at Malaya, appeared on a balcony, accompanied by Major Fujiwara, Colonel N S. Gill, Capt. Mohan Singh and a few other Japanese and Indian Officers.

He collected all the officers in one place and made a brief speech over the microphone, in which he said, "From today we are all prisoners of war. I now, on behalf of the British Government, hand you over to the Japanese Government, whose orders you will obey as you have been doing ours If you don't, you will be punished". After this he brought the whole lot to attention and handed over some papers, nominal rolls of Indian soldiers to the Japanese representative, Major Fujiwara Major Fujiwara then brought us to attention and said, "I, on behalf of the Japanese Government, take you over under our command" He went on to say, "I, on behalf of the Japanese Government, now hand you over to G.O.C. Capt Mohan Singh who shall have powers of life and death over you"

We watched the representative of the British Government

very carefully to see what his reactions were to the events that were taking place before his eyes. But he apparently was quite satisfied with the arrangement as he did not attempt in any way to dispute the unlawful handing over of Indian prisoners of war to a person who was as much a prisoner of war as any one of the rest Perhaps he was not worried about the Indians any longer and was more concerned with what awaited him at the British Prison Camp at Changi At this stage he left the balcony Major Fujiwara then continued his speech in Japanese, which was translated into English by a Japanese Officer and into Hindustani by Colonel Gill

Major Fujiwara said, "Japan is fighting for the liberation of the Asiatic Nations which have been for so long trodden under the cruel heels of British Imperialism Japan is the liberator and the friend of Asiatics Japan wishes to inaugurate a New Order in East Asia This new order will take the form of a Co-prosperity Sphere of East Asia, which will consist of free and equal nations, co-operating with each other for the common good The independence of India is essential for the independence of Asia and the peace of the world, and it is the duty of Indians to free themselves Japan is willing to give all-out aid and assistance to Indians in East Asia to achieve their aspirations"

After this, Capt Mohan Singh came to the microphone and delivered a speech in Hindustani He said that the British authorities blamed the Indian troops for not fighting well in the Malayan Campaign But, they provided no air support, nor were there armoured fighting vehicles, or any modern weapons so necessary to wage a modern war against a formidable enemy like the Japanese army The British authorities were entirely to blame for the Malayan and Singapore fiasco, and the Indian soldiers there were as good fighters as ever He then said, "The days of British oppression in the East are numbered and their hated rule must soon come to an end The Japanese armed forces have driven them from Malaya and Singapore and they are beating a hasty retreat in Burma India stands on the threshold of freedom and it is incum-

bent on every Indian to fight and drive away those demons who have been for so many decades sucking the life-blood of Indians. The Japanese have promised us their all-out help in the realisation of our coveted dreams and it is up to us now to organize ourselves and fight for the freedom of 400 millions of our countrymen and women For this purpose we will organize an Indian National Army from amongst the Indian soldiers and civilians in the Far East"

This speech of Capt Mohan Singh got a mixed reception By some it was received with great acclamation and shouts of "INQALAB ZINDABAD" and raising of their hands to show their willingness to join the I N A Apart from the hatred of the British that existed in the mind of every self-respecting Indian, another possible reason for this acclamation might have been that we had been told numerous tales of Japanese barbarities and inhuman treatment that would be accorded to prisoners of war, and now we were being told by the Japanese themselves that we would be accorded the treatment of a brother rather than that of an enemy or a defeated soldier Naturally there was a feeling of great relief and rejoicing

But there was a large proportion of soldiers in the Farrer Park to whom the idea of joining hands with the Japanese and fighting against their own kith and kin did not appeal much This was the case with the officer class in particular. To us these speeches came as bomb shells The very idea of joining hands with our former enemies and fighting against our own kith and kin was fantastic I, as well as most other officers, had a feeling of being completely helpless at being handed over like cattle by the British to the Japs and by the Japs to Capt Mohan Singh, whom they gave powers of life and death over us. With all due regards to Capt Mohan Singh's sincerity and leadership that he displayed later, I, who had known him well for the last 10 years, knew that he had always been an efficient but a very average officer The mere fact of being handed over to him and his having powers of life and death

over us, made us feel suspicious of Japanese intentions, because, among the Indian prisoners of war, there were some very senior and capable officers like Col Gill, Col Bhonsle, Major Mehtab Singh and Major Bhagat All these officers had at least 15-20 years service in the army, whereas Gen Mohan Singh had only 8—9 years service as an officer.

I was fully convinced, knowing Capt. Mohan Singh so well, that politically, at any rate, he would not be able to cope with Japanese intrigue and that we would be exploited by the Japanese purely for their personal ends I, therefore, firmly made up my mind not to have anything to do with such an I N.A , and inspite of a feeling of frustration and helplessness, the element of traditional loyalty to the King overcame these feelings and not only did I make up my own mind to keep out of the I.N.A. but as the head of a famous military tribe I felt it my duty to warn all others, especially the men I commanded and those men who came from the same area as I did, to keep out of it

Here I would like to explain that I belonged to a soldier family that had been serving in the Indian Army for the last three generations and in which loyalty to the King had become almost a tradition. At the Indian Military Academy, I was given a scholarship known as the "King Emperor's Cadetship"—an honour that was given to a cadet with the best military traditions and likely to live upto it. There was a fairly large section among the prisoners of war who thought on the same lines as I did. The type of remarks we made were "If any one asks you to shoot at your own brethern, turn round and shoot him first"

There were many King's and Viceroy's Commissioned Officers, whom I knew well before the war, who got together and decided to keep out of the I N.A , which, we fully realized, the Japanese were raising to utilize for their own selfish ends

It was in this frame of mind that I marched off with 20,000 other prisoners of war to a camp in Neesoon. On arrival there I continued to persist in my idea and kept on telling everyone who

came to me for advice to keep out of the I.N A After a few days I was appointed Commander of Neesoon Camp

Administration and life in Camps.

After the meeting in Farrer Park, Capt Mohan Singh set up his Headquarters at Mount Pleasant in Singapore, adjacent to the Head Quarters of "Fujiwara Kikan"—an organization set up under Major Fujiwara to promote the Indian Independence Movement in the Far East A prisoner of war Head Quarters to administer all the Prisoner of War Camps was set up at Neesoon under Col. N S Gill with Col J K Bhonsle as the Adjutant and Quarter Master General and Col A C Chatterjee as the Director of Medical Service

These Head Quarters were under the I N A , H Q at Mount Pleasant

All the Prisoners of War were allocated to different camps in Singapore These were situated at

(1) Neesoon under the command of Major M Z, Kiani.
(2) Bidadari under the command of Lt Col. I Z. Nagar.
(3) Tyrsal Park under the command of Major Tehl Singh.
(4) Kranji under the command of Lieut. Parshotam Das
(5) Seletar under the command of Major Windman

In all these camps living conditions were most unsatisfactory The accommodation was sufficiently only for about 1/5th of the strength stationed there, with the result that there was a terrible amount of over-crowding which led to outbreaks of various epidemics The water supply of Singapore had been cut off during the operations, with the result that all the sanitary arrangement had also broken down With such a large number of men in these camps it was a most difficult task to keep up the sanitation and it was only as a result of the most strenuous efforts of camp commandants and the medical officer, that deadly epidemics, like cholera and dysentry, were brought under control

Another great problem that the Medical Officer had to contend with was the lack of medical supplies. There were as many as 5000

sick and wounded soldier in various hospitals which received no fresh supplies of medicines from the Japanese, and all the British stocks of medicines had been cleverly taken to the British Prisoner of war camp at Changi by the Director of Medical Services, who was an Englishman The Indians, however, lodged a protest against the Director, and the Japanese were able to pursuade him to part with some of his stocks for Indian Soldiers

In the early stages there was no supply of fresh meat or vegetables which made the diet very deficient in Vitamins, with the result that a large number of soldiers developed deficiency diseases like Beri-Beri and Scurvy The Japanese had taken charge of all the ration stores in Singapore and it was the most difficult thing to explain to them why rice, atta, dal, ghee, chillies, spices and salt were all required for one and the same meal. The Japanese soldiers eat a very simple diet of boiled rice and vegetable or fish with a little salt added to it—and they could not understand why the Indian soldiers would require so many things They delivered many lectures to us, rebuking us for eating such luxurious meals, and stressing on virtues of the simple Japanese meal On some occasions they tried to force these virtues on us by refusing to issue more than one item of food a day. On some days they would issue only pepper and say go and live on this today. After a few days, however, we got to know each other better, and we had to give a practical demonstration of Indian cooking to them to convince them that so many different items were really required for one meal After the Japanese had a few meals with us they almost gave up their virtuous Japanese meals of which they had talked so much in the beginning.

No pay of any sort was paid to the troops for the first six months.

While all this was going on Capt. Mohan Singh, with his original band of 200 volunteers under Capt Alla Ditta Khan and some new and zealous workers, was busy organizing propaganda lectures and meetings with the object of infusing a national spirit in them and to induce Indian Prisoners of War to join the I N.A, which

he promised was to be raised in the near future His propaganda was particularly successful and he managed to convince approximately 30,000 Prisoners of War who volunteered to join the I.N A. In a very brief space of time Capt Mohan Singh became very popular with the great majority of Indian soldiers In his dealings with the Japanese he displayed extraordinary ability and firmness which endeared him to the soldiers He was particularly fortunate in having such men as Cols Gill and Chatterjee to advise and assist him in his task.

The majority of officers, however, were still unconvinced, and they felt, that in view of the previous record of the Japanese nation, it was wrong to trust them and that the best course for us was to remain prisoners of War. I was one of these officers, and it was my intention to see that the I N A was never raised. With this object, therefore, the first thing I did on reaching Neesoon was to organize a block of officers, approximately 20 in number, to resist the formation of the I N A.

Early in March, 1942, Lt. Col N.S Gill and Major Mahabir Singh Dhillon went to Saigon to confer with the Senior Japanese Officer there At this conference these two officers were informed that final decisions regarding the Indian Independence Movement would be discussed at the forthcoming conference of Indian delegates to be held at Tokyo

In the last week of March, 1942 a conference of Indian delegates was held at Tokyo Malaya sent a good-will mission consisting of Capt Mohan Singh, Lt. Col N.S Gill, Capt Mohd Akram Khan, Mr Raghvan, Mr. K P.K. Menon, and Mr. S. C Goho to attend the conference

From Bangkok Swami Satyanand Puri and Mr Pritam Singh also accompanied the goodwill mission from Malaya.

An unfortunate air crash on the way resulted in the death of Capt Mohd Akram, Swami Satyanand and Mr Pritam Singh It was rumoured in several camps that the air crash was conveniently arranged by the Japanese, as all these three gentlemen were well known for their frankness and dislike of the Japanese

At the Tokyo Conference it was resolved to hold a conference of the delegates of all Indians residing in East Asia, at Bangkok in the month of June, 1942. The conference also decided to start an Indian Independence League, the object being, "To secure Indian Independence, complete and free from foreign domination, interference, or control of whatever nature" It was also decided to raise an Indian National Army to fight for India's liberation. The final and official inauguration of the Indian Independence League and the selection of the Council of Action was left to the Bangkok Conference

Bidadari Resolutions.

Soon after the surrender of Singapore, Capt Mohan Singh called a meeting of senior officers and discussed the question of raising the I N A The officers were unanimously of the opinion that on such a vital question each individual should have the right to express his views Capt Mohan Singh agreed to this suggestion and commanding officers of Units were asked to collect opinions of all officers and men under their command and to forward them to Capt. Mohan Singh's Head Quarters

In April, 1942, after the return of Capt Mohan Singh from Tokyo, another meeting of senior officers was held in Bidadari Camp—Singapore. After a great deal of discussion, the following resolutions were passed —

(*a*) We are Indians first and Indians last We do not recognize any differences of class, creed or religion

(*b*) The Independence of India, is our birth-right

(*c*) An Indian National Army will be raised to fight for the independence of India This Army will only go into action on the invitation of the Indian National Congress and the people of India.

(*d*) Until then we shall endeavour to make ourselves better and patriotic Indians

It was also resolved that these resolutions should be explained to all the officers and soldiers of the Indian army and a list of those who accepted these resolutions be prepared Eventually, these lists

were prepared and volunteers, who accepted these resolutions were separated from the rest

While these important events of far-reaching consequences were taking place between February—April, 1942, all the troops living in various camps were aligning themselves in two camps

(*a*) Volunteers, who trusted the Japanese and were prepared to join the I. N. A.

(*b*) Non-Volunteers, who did not trust the Japanese and were not prepared to join the I N A

Speaking very broadly, the bulk of Sikhs, Dogras and Jats were volunteers. The Punjabi Muslims, Pathans and Gurkhas, were non-volun teers. But, this was a purely psychological difference, and in actual fact there was difference in the treatment, rations and accommodation of volunteers and non-volunteers. They were all living in the same barracks, eating the same food and doing the same work Capt. Mohan Singh's propaganda agents were, however, busy the whole time and were reporting the situation and feelings in various camps to Capt. Mohan Singh.

In March, 1942, the Japanese asked for a number of labour parties to be sent to Thailand and Borneo A party of approximately 1,000 men and some officers, including Capt Dhargalkar, Capt Hari Budhwar of the 3rd Cavalry, Capt Tajik and Capt Jiwan Singh were sent to Bangkok; and another party of approximately 500 men under Major N S Bhagat of the Indian Engineers, was sent to Borneo. Both these parties consisted of non-volunteers, and it is true that these officers had expressed their opinion of Capt. Mohan Singh and the I. N A too openly.

The party that went to Bangkok, got into trouble with the local Japanese Commander, who had asked the Indian Officers to submit lists of their men showing their trades and technical qualifications The Japanese wished to employ Indian drivers and mechanics in their Motor Transport companies. The Indian Officers refused to submit any such lists on the ground that such a thing was not

permitted by the Geneva Convention of International Law, and that as prisoners all that they were entitled to give out was their name, rank and unit The Japanese contended that they were not signatories to the Geneva convention, and that even the British Prisoners of War at Changi had given all such information, and, in actual fact, British and Australian prisoners were driving Japanese lorries and working in Japanese workshops The Indian Officers, however, refused to co-operate and three of them, Capt Dhargalkar, Capt. H. Budhwar and Capt A. A Tajik were taken into custody and were treated badly However, some statements that have appeared in the press to say that they were hung upside down for 88 days, and that all this maltreatment was given to them because they refused to join the I N A is a gross exaggeration, with the object of currying favour with their British Their maltreatment had nothing to do with their joining or not joining the I N A In fact when Capt Mohan Singh went to Bangkok in June 1942, to attend the conference there, he heard about this incident and through his intervention secured the release of these officers from Japanese custody and brought them back to Singapore.

Concentration Camp

In the courts martial of the I N A. held in the Red Fort of Delhi, all the British allegations against the members of the I N. A. have centred round the socalled atrocities committed by the I N A against the Indian prisoners of war Even the prosecuting Officers in the trial were forced to admit that the tales regarding the concentration camp were grossly exaggerated and unfounded in fact In this chapter I will attempt to draw a truthful picture of the concentration camp so that the Indian people can judge the actual facts for themselves.

After the surrender the Japanese allowed the Indian officers and men to live together in the same camps. They made Indian officers responsible for maintaining order and discipline among their units. A large number of soldiers, however, felt that by being officially handed over by the British to the Japanese, their allegiance to the

King was ended and that from then on they were as good prisoners as their officers, whom they did not feel bound to obey any longer As a result of this feeling there was indiscipline in the camps and on one occasion a commanding officer was severely beaten by the men of his own unit. There were also instances where Indian soldiers would creep out of their camps at night and loot and rape the civilians living near those camps. Members of a particular unit made it a habit to go and steal cows belonging to civilians and slaughter them in their camps There were others who specialised in stealing pigs and slaughtering them in camps As there were both Hindus and Muslims living in those camps, it was realized by everyone that unless some drastic steps were taken the situation would worsen and might lead to Hindu-Muslim fight. It was with the intention of putting an end to such offences that the concentration camp was started, and those who were sent there on account of offences stated above very well deserved the punishment which they received. The treatment in the concentration camp was rough, but not brutal. Later on, however, particularly after April, 1942, a number of officers and men were taken to the concentration camp on suspicion of being British fifth columnists and for carrying on anti-I N. A. propaganda At any rate, *never at any time was the treatment accorded to prisoners in the I N. A concentration camp worse than the treatment that was meted out to the officers and men of the I. N A in the early stages of captivity in the Red Fort of Delhi.*

In Oct 1942, Col. N. S. Bhagat changed the name of the camp to "Detention Camp" and after the formation of the 2nd I. N. A under the director of the Military Bureau, Major General Bhonsle, and the arrival of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, even the British authorities have not been able to quote one instance of harsh or unfair treatment given to any one in the detention camp.

After this a camp known as the officers separation camp was started by Capt Mohan Singh after May, 1942 All such officers who were suspected of doing anti-I. N A propaganda or attempt-

ing to prevent others from becoming volunteers were taken to this camp and kept separated from their units. This camp was abolished by Capt. Mohan Singh in October, 1942.

Japanese Intentions Exposed

(1) CHANGI GUARD.—Early in March, 1942, the Japanese approached Capt. Mohan Singh and requested him to send a guard of Indian soldiers to go and take over guard duties on the British Prisoner of War camp at Changi They assured him that this was only the beginning and it was necessary to impress the Japanese Headquarters of the fact that the Indians were really eager and willing to co-operate with the Japanese. By doing this, they said, he would be creating the right atmosphere in which to lay the foundations of the I. N. A

But the real object of the Japanese in asking for Indian soldiers to be sent to do guard duty at the British Camp at Changi was to relieve Japanese troops for more active roles in the field; and secondly, by giving the Indian soldiers this duty, they hoped to remove their "inferiority complex". This was a part of a general policy that the Japanese followed in all newly conquered areas in East Asia By deliberately humiliating the white races they intended to show Asiatics that they were as good, perhaps better, than the Europeans.

Capt Mohan Singh, in view of the larger interest of raising the I,N A agreed to provide this guard, and Lieut G S. Dhillon (I N A. Colonel) was selected for this unpleasant duty The majority of the Indian officers were not in favour of this step, because, by nature, the Indian is chivalrous and he does not believe in hitting a fallen enemy. Doing guard duty over captured prisoners was not the type of service the volunteers wished to do to liberate their country. In fact, there was general resentment against this; but Lieut. Dhillon, the fine soldier that he is, having once given his word to Capt. Mohan Singh, accepted all his orders, pleasant or otherwise The Changi guard was put directly under command of the Japanese and continued functioning till the arrival of Netaji

ncident of Indian Anti-Aircraft Gunners

Early in March, closely following the Changi Guard episode, the Japanese asked Capt Mohan Singh to provide approximately 900 Indian anti-aircraft gunners to take over the defence of Singapore Island. Capt Mohan Singh agreed. He collected all the gunners in one place and lectured to them and told them that there was danger of our camps being attacked by British aircraft, and that Indian A. A. Gunners would have to defend our camps in case of such air attacks. He said that before they could be entrusted with guns, it would be necessary for them to do a short training course under the Japanese. They were given an assurance that they would only be employed in defence of their own camps and inside India to protect liberated areas against enemy air raids Consequently, approximately 600 gunners were sent to be trained under the Japanese. In actual fact these man had been manning A. A guns for several years and were experts in their use. They required no further training. The Japs, however, only wished to use them for their own benefit and on arrival in Japanese camps these men were divided into different parties each approximately 100 strong and placed directly under command of Japanese officers and N C. Os Some of these parties were forcibly put on board ship and taken to defend various Islands in the Pacific, and the first information that Mohan Singh received about them was through a Japanese newspaper, which applauded the brave deeds of Indian gunners on the Island of Cebo and regretted the death of a large number This was very much resented by all officers and men of the Indian Army in whose minds many grave doubts were aroused as to the real intentions of the Japanese.

Other parties that remained behind in Singapore were subjected to a very harsh and brutal treatment. Indian officers were slapped by Japanese N C Os and when they protested they were starved for several days Some were even bayonetted Eventually some of them managed to escape from their camp and reported to Capt Mohan Singh that the Japanese were trying to make Japanese soldiers out of them Capt Mohan Singh, accompanied by one Japanese

Japanese officer Lieut Kunzuka, went to see their living conditions in their Japanese-controlled camp, but he was not granted permission by the sentry to enter the camp This also created great resentment and indignation among all Indian officers and men

This inhuman and treacherous treatment of Indian gunners continued till the arrival of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose who was able to extricate the remnants from Japanese cluthces and enrolled them in the I N A

The incidents of the Changi Guard and Indian Anti-aircraft gunners further convinced me that the Japanese were merely talking of Indian Independence without any intentions of fulfilling their promises. It seemed to me that their only object was to exploit us to their own advantage I was, therefore, determined that I would do everything to prevent the I N A coming into existence. In this I had the full support and sympathy of the block of offices who were of the same opinion as myself.

In April, 1942, a vigorous propaganda campaign was launched by Capt Mohan Singh, and concentration camps were started where the officers and men who did not approve of the I N A. were taken for detention

I, however, staunchly refused to allow anyone under my command to be sent to the concentration camp, and on one occasion I had to resign my command of the camp in protest to prevent some of my officers being taken to the concentration camp. In short, during the time that I was commanding the Neesoon Camp I allowed everyone to express his opinion freely without any fear of being sent to the concentration camp, and no one was ever sent there during the period of my command of that camp

By early May, 1942, it was quite evident that with the unlimited powers given to him and with Japanese determination Capt. Singh would succeed in forming an I N A. In this month we had also to finally decide whether or not we would accept the Bidadari resolutions and become volunteers We were told that volunteers and non-volunteers would be separated and put into different camps.

In view of this new situation, we held several meetings of the block of officers who were against the formation of the I N A, and we came to the decision that it was useless for senior officers to stay out of the I N A. and be sent to the concentration camp. We decided that the best course was (a) for the senior officers to join the I.N.A, gain control of it and prevent the ill-treatment of Prisoners of War and also to prevent their exploitation by the Japanese If we were unable to do this, then we would try and wreck the I.N A from within if and when we had an opportunity to do so (b) For the rank and file to remain out of the I N A and if need be to undergo hardships and ill-treatment, but the senior officers in the I.N.A would do their best to help them. This at that time concerned mainly the muslims.

Therefore, in accordance with this decision in Mid-May, 1942, at Neesoon, in the presence of a propaganda lecture party under Colonel Chatterji and approximately 400 officers from Neesoon Camp, I told them that I had decided to volunteer for the I N.A on the basis of the "Bidadari Resolutions." I also told every one present to make up their minds and decide one way or the other. I also asked unit commanders to hand in the lists of volunteers and non-volunteers on the following day, as they had to be separated. The same afternoon I called a meeting of all Muslim officers in the Mosque and explained my reasons for joining the I N A I also told them that uptil then I had given them all possible help and protection and the time had come when we would be separated I, however, promised all possible help to them wherever they might be and expressed the hope that they would never join the I N.A through force or coercion They all promised that they would never yield to any coercion and paid a "Dua Khair"—a religious confirmation of the decision taken

Bangkok Conference

A few days later Capt Mohan Singh called a conference of all senior officers at his bungalow at Mount Pleasant to discuss plans for the forthcoming Bangkok Conference He revealed that a con-

ference would be held at Bangkok in June, and that he was entitled to take 90 delegates to it on behalf of the Indian Prisoners of War This was 1/3 of the total number of the delegation that was to assemble at Bangkok representing Indians in East Asia He went on to say that he did not think it necessary for all 90 army representatives to go, and that he proposed to take only 30 delegates and for the remaining 60 he said, he would take their proxy votes He concluded saying that since everyone had full confidence in him, he himself would nominate the delegates who were to proceed to Bangkok Everyone present agreed with this

My own feeling was that at Bangkok, we were likely to be "committed" too far and I was not in favour of Indian Prisoners of War participating in such a conference. After Capt Mohan Singh had finished his speech, I got up and told him that I did not agree with his idea of sending delegates to Bangkok I told him that since he was taking a delegation there, which was likely to deal with very important matters concerning the future of Indian Prisoners of War, the men going there should be those who commanded the confidence of the Prisoners of War, and I suggested three alternative methods for their selection.

(1) Camps should be allotted a number of seats in accordance with the number of Prisoners of War residing there, and the choice of actual delegates should be left to them

(2) Failing this, vacancies should be allotted to each community in proportion to its strength and the choice of delegates left to them.

(3) And finally, if none of the two above-mentioned methods suited him, and since we all had full confidence in him, it was not necessary for him to take a delegation of 30 representatives there, and only he and his personal A D C would suffice for the purpose and then it would not be called a delegation representing the Indian Prisoners of War Every one present at the meeting agreed with my proposal, and Capt Mohan Singh, in the fact of this unanimous demand, promised to inform us the following day, which

one of the 3 methods suggested by me was acceptable to him. The conference then dispersed and we all returned to our respective camps.

On arrival at my camp I collected all officers and told them what had transpired at the conference. They unanimously agreed with my action.

On the following day, Capt. Pattanayak one of the Adjutants of Capt. Mohan Singh, came to me in my camp office and told me that he had 35 proxy votes which he wanted me to have filled in by the officers in my camp I reminded him of the meeting that Capt. Mohan Singh had held at his residence on the previous day and of his promise to inform us of the method to be employed for the *selection of delegates. At any rate, I asked him to let me have the* list of delegates that were going to Bangkok, so that we could give our proxy votes in favour of those officers whom we trusted The exact form of the proxy was "I   hereby give my proxy vote to   whose decision will be legally binding on me"

Capt. Pattanayak was, however, unwilling to give this information to me and suggested that the names of Officers in whose favour proxies were to be given, should be left blank, and that he would fill in the names himself later This was very objectionable, and I refused to ask any officer to sign the proxy forms. Capt Pattanayak then departed in a very angry mood and told me that I would know all about it by the evening I also brought this conversation to the notice of all Officers in my camp, and they all unanimously endorsed my action. That night, however, I received orders of transfer to Kuala Lumpur in command of Parties of ardent non-volunteers Consequently, from Neesoon, the largest Prisoners of War camp only one delegate went to attend the conference. He was prosecution witness No 2 in the first I N.A. trial—Subedar Major Babu Ram—who went under orders There were several others who were nominated to go but they refuse to go as "Nominees". Not a single proxy vote from Neesoon camp went to Bangkok

On the day of my transfer to Kuala-Lumpur Capt. Mohan

Singh held a meeting of all Prisoners of War at Seletar and declared that he had found out that there was a party within his party which was trying to wreck the movement started by him, and that he was going to take steps to finish off all such elements

The delegation to Bangkok left Singapore early in June as the conference was scheduled to be held at Bangkok on 15th June, 1924 The Indian Army sent 30 delegates, together with 60 proxy votes Besides these, Indian delegates from all over East Asia, including Messrs Raghvan, Menon and Goho of Malaya, also attended Mr. Bose was elected the president of the conference

The opening day of the conference was attended by the following dignitaries

The Foreign Minister of Thailand, the Italian Minister to Thailand, the German Minister to Thailand, and the Japanese Ambassador to Thailand.

These foreign dignitaries read messages of felicitation from their respective governments The Conference adopted seventeen resolutions, and the main points of which were

(*a*) A "Council of Action" consisting of the following members was elected to direct the Indian Independence Movement in East Asia —Mr R B. Bose (President), Capt Mohan Singh, Mr N Raghvan Mr K P K Menon and Lt Col G Q Gillani

(*b*) It was decided to reorganise the Indian Independence League Branches all over East Asia These branches were to function entirely independently of any Japanese influence and control whatsoever They were to function under the direction of H Q I I League at Bangkok

(c) India was to be considered as one indivisible whole and no partition of India on whatever grounds would be considered

(*a*) The Indian National Congress was the only national representative body of India

(*e*) Independence was the birth-right of Indians, and Indians in East Asia were determined to fight to achieve this objective

(*f*) The Imperial Nippon Government undertook to help Indians in East Asia with arms, ammunitions and necessary military equipment to achieve this objective

(*g*) The Imperial Nippon Government would recognize Indians in East Asia as citizens of a free country and would exert its influence on other friendly powers to recognize Indians in their respective territories as free citizens

(*h*) No property belonging to Indians in East Asia was to be considered as "enemy" property. The property of Indians who had evacuated from East Asia would be handed over to the Council of Action of the I I League, and this property would be kept in trust by the League.

(*i*) After India was free, a regular treaty would be signed by the new Government in India and the Japanese Government, and that this conference of Indians in East Asia did not bind the Indians in India to any agreement or commitment with Japan

(*j*) All help taken by the Indians in East Asia from the Imperial Nippon Government, in the form of war material etc would be considered as a debt and would be paid by Free India.

(*k*) An Army to be called the "Indian National Army" would be raised from among the volunteers from Indian Prisoners of War and the Indian civilians

(*l*) Capt Mohan Singh was appointed General Officer Commanding the newly created I N A

(*m*) The Japanese Government was requsted to approach the Government of Germany to enable Mr. Subhas

Chandra Bose to come to East Asia to take charge of the Indian Independence Movement.

(n) The I N A. would be recognized by all the Axis Powers as a free and an allied army

(o) The Imperial Nippon Government would ratify these resolutions

My transfer and stay at Kuala Lumpur (June-September, 1942).

At the time of my transfer to Kuala Lumpur I and other officers of my bloc realized that Capt. Mohan Singh had seen through our real intentions and was trying to get us out of the way. But, by this time we were more than convinced that the Japanese were out to exploit us for their own ends and so we were determined to stick to the I.N.A. and prevent its being exploited.

I arrived at Kuala Lumpur by goods train early in June, and I was followed there by several groups of the staunchest non-volunteers On the arrival of all the parties, I was ordered to assemble them for the Japanese Commander's inspection I did so The Jap commander then addressed all of us and said, "I welcome you all and am very pleased to have you under my command We regard you not as Prisoners of War but as brothers as we are all Asiatics. It is the most ardent desire of the Japanese nation that India should achieve its Independence as soon as possible, and to enable you to participate in the freedom fight We have made arrangements for re-arming and training you"

This was greatly resented by all of us as we had no intention of being re-armed and undergoing military training under the Japanese After the parade the Prisoners of War refused to dismiss unless their status and position as prisoners of War was clarified

I took the Japanese commander to my office and in the presence of other fellow officers explained the situation. I told him that some of us who were known as volunteers were willing to take up arms and fight the British, but those who were non-volunteers wished to remain and be treated purely as prisoners of War. I informed him that the question of Indian Independence was an affair of the Indians and

that the Japanese should not force any Indian against his wishes to participate in the fight for freedom I assured him that, as far as the Japanese were concerned, we were all willing to help them in our own way in their war against the Anglo-Americans. I also told him that the "volunteers" would help by actually fighting the British, and non-volunteers would help by strengthening rear bases and lines of communications, such as building aerodromes, railways, roads, etc

He agreed with me and said the latter task was even more important from their point of view than the first one, and he agreed to issue necessary orders to all Japanese Commanders in Malaya under his command that "Volunteers" were to be employed in fighting, and "Non-volunteers" were to be used as Labourers

A similar trouble occured at Seremban where, on refusal of the Prisoners of War to take up arms, the Japanese fixed machine guns all round the camp and put the camp commander Capt Ghulam Mohd 3/16 Punjab Rifles in a cell and gave the prisoners of war 24 hours to think about it The Prisoners of War were told that if at the end of 24 hours they still refused they would all be executed I heard about this and at once rushed to Seremban with the Jap Commanders orders given at Kuala Lumpur (mentioned above) and after a great deal of persuasion I was able to make the commander of the Seremban Camp to see our point of view

In a similar manner I visited all the stations in Malaya, where the Indian Prisoners of War were employed, and ensured that they were not coerced into taking up arms or undergoing military training under the Japs

24 Men selected for execution by the Japanese

On one occassion, when I was out of station on tour, the Japanese took away 24 N C Os belonging to the 42nd Field Park Coy Royal Bombay S & M unit on the accusation that they were too pro-British They decided to execute them and made them sign their last will When I returned from tour and learnt of this I at once went to the Japanese G H Q and requested them to hand over my

soldiers to me. I told them that I was supposed to be their commander, and in principle it was wrong for the Japanese to deal directly with my subordinate officers and take away the men under my command without my knowledge or concurrence Finally, I informed them that if they insisted on doing this I would resign from my post They then told me that I could take away 15 of them, but the remaining 9 must be executed as they were too pro-British, and, though they were Japanese prisoners, they still insisted that they had taken an oath of loyalty to the King of England

I explained the full significance of this oath to them and told them that the normal procedure for dealing with any serious offence in the Indian Army was to hold a "Court of Enquiry", and I assured them that I would go very thoroughly into the case, and if in the end the Court found their offence to be of a serious nature I would myself hand over the men to the Japanese for punishment

They agreed to this and I brought all the 24 N. C Os. safely back to their unit, held a court of enquiry and released all of them

While the Japanese in Malaya and Singapore were attempting to coerce and exploit Indian soldiers for the well-being of Japan, leaders all over the world, in Bangkok, India and Berlin were busy preparing for a final struggle that would be fought purely and solely for the Independence of India We, the Indian soldiers, while burning with the desire to do our utmost for the liberation of our mother land, were unwilling to allow ourselves to be exploited by the Japanese. While in this difficult predicament I heard a broadcast by Netaji Subhas Chandra over the Berlin Radio

The Japanese had confiscated all our Radio sets, but some of us managed to keep a few sets concealed in our Camps. His voice came clear and resolute and even over the Radio we could feel the power of his oratory. How we all wished he could come and lead us personally in the battle for India's liberation and do away with Japanese exploitation !

Here are some portions of his speech in his own words :—

"Inspite of British propaganda it should be clear to all right-thinking Indians that in this wide world India has but one enemy—the enemy who has exploited her for over a hundred years, the enemy who sucks the life blood of Mother India—British Imperialism I am not an apologist of the Tripartite Powers ; that is not my job My concern is with India When British Imperialism is defeated, India will get her freedom If on the other hand, British Imperialism should somehow win the war, then India's slavery would be perpetuated for ever. India is, therefore, presented with the choice between Freedom and Slavery. She must make her choice .".

"Britain's paid propagandists have been calling me an enemy agent I need no credentials when I speak to my own people. My whole life is one long persistant, uncompromising struggle against British Imperialism and is the best guarantee of my bona fides All my life I have been the servant of India Until the last hour of my life I shall remain one My allegiance and loyalty have ever been and will ever be to India alone, no matter in which part of the world I may live If you make a dispassionate and objective study of different theatres of War today, you will come to the same conclusion as myself that nothing on earth can prevent the rapid collapse of the British Empire Already the outposts in the Indian Ocean have passed out of the hands of British sea power. Mandlay has fallen and fallen troops have been practically expelled from Burmese soil . Countrymen, when the British Empire is disappearing, the day of India's deliverance approaches I want to remind you that in the year 1857 began India's first war of Independence In May 1942 has begun her last war of Independence Gird up your loins The hour of India's salvation is at hand "

Quit India Resolution and mass Rally at Kuala Lumpur

On August the 11th, 1942, news reached Malaya that the Indian National Congress had demanded at an A I C C meeting in Bombay that the British must quit India Mahatma Gandhi had said "Do or Die" to all patriots "Do not wait for a lead from

leaders, do what you think right, do what you think shall bring us freedom" was his message to the Indian people

The Indians at Kuala Lumpur decided to hold a mass rally to express their appreciation and approval of the "Quit India" resolution passed by the Indian National Congress and to express their indignation at the arrest of Mahatma Gandhi and other prominent national leaders That day in the morning Japanese Liaison Officer Lieut Nyui, came to me and told me that the General Commanding Kuala Lumpur Area wished to know if I and my troops would like to take part in the rally. I told him that we would. He then went on to say that in that case we would have to march to the scene of the meeting carrying at the head of the column Japanese and Indian National Flags crossed He said that this would be a sign of goodwill and close co-operation between the Japanese and the Indians I told him to go and inform the General that if that was the condition, I would not take part in the rally I told him that no Indian wished to carry the National Flag of another nation, and that, if Japanese intention was to show to the world that they could make the prisoners carry the Japanese flag by force then they ought to insist on this, otherwise not Finally I assured him that if we went to the rally we would march there only under our own National Flag and would not carry any Japanese Flags He went to the General and informed him of this. The Japanese General not only allowed me to have my own way but also issued orders that on that day no civilians were to show or carry Japanese Flag

We went to the rally which was held at a big maidan at Kuala Lumpur, where approximately 45,000 people of all nationalities were present Some high-ranking Japanese Officers were also present at that meeting

I was asked to deliver a speech on behalf of the Indian soldiers I did so, and in the course of the speech, I said, "Nobody should ever have any misconception that the Japanese were going to make the I N A a puppet force" I added that if on arriving

in India, we found that the Japanese had any designs on it, we would turn round and fight them most vigorously, and I assured them all that rather than become a Japanese puppet, every single soldier of I N. A. would perish fighting to uphold India's honour This remark of mine thrilled the masses and there was wild cheering, perhaps it was too bold a statement to make when the people were terrified of the Japanese. A recording of my speech was also made The next day the Japanese General met me and congratulated me on my speech, and said if the Japanese went to India with the intention of replacing the British we should fight them, otherwise we would be traitors to ourown country

Thus, during the period June-September 1942, when I was commanding the Indian prisoners of War in Malaya, I served them to the best of my ability and many a time I had to travel by Goods trains without food, and had to face insults and humiliation from Junior Japanese Officers for the sake of the men I commanded I refused to allow the Japanese to exploit the Indian prisoners of War in any way, and at the same time secured for them the best treatment that was given to any prisoner of War in East Asia

I always upheld the honour and prestige of my country and refused to brook any racial superiority from the Japanese I also induced the Japanese not to arrest any Indian soldiers who had turned civilians during the war and were honourably earning their living

Propaganda for the formation of the I N A

After the return of the delegates from the Bangkok Conference, resolutions were discussed with only a few Senior Officers, while it was kept secret from the others until the official ratification of these resolutions came from Tokyo.

Some selected officers were detailed to visit various camps and explain the proceedings of the Bangkok Conference to the men Lectures on Nationalism were intensified, and all ranks were told of the seriousness of the step that they were asked to take in joining the I N A

During this period of intensified activity, Capt. Mohan Singh had to take some serious steps and adopt drastic measures against those who knowingly tried to undermine this propaganda amongst the ranks Certain officers who proved to be stumbling blocks were departed from their units Detention camps were opened where such anti-I N A elements were segregated

The Japanese Military Government in Malaya kindly permitted the I I League to broadcast a programme of Indian propaganda over the Singapore Radio Station Mr K P K Menon was appointed propaganda-secretary of the I I League, while the Radio department was placed under Major Irshad Ali Sahibzada I M S Messages from Indian soldiers and civilians to India and speeches by prominent members of the I I L and the Army were regular features of this daily broadcast

Prior to this, officers of the Army had been despatched to Saigon and Bangkok to take charge of Radio programmes broadcast from these Radio Stations. Very interesting broadcasts from Saigon Radio Station were made by Col Ehsan Qadir, Col Nagar and Col. I Hassan, and were eagerly listened to by people in India

A paper called the *Azad Hind* was published daily from Singapore under the control of the I I.League. This paper was published in English, Tamil, Malayalam, Roman Urdu and Gujrati

Organization and formation of the I N A

Shortly after the Bangkok conference, Major Fujiwara was transferred and he was replaced by a Col of the Iwakuro Kikan This department issued instructions to Capt Mohan Singh regarding the organization of the I N A The Japanese informed Capt Mohan Singh of the quantity of arms, equipment and transport they would issue to the I.N A, and that the organization of the I N A should conform to the means placed at the disposal of Capt. Mohan Singh by the Japanese

Capt Mohan Singh detailed Major M Z Kiani to work out the details of the organization Eventually it was decided that the I N.A should consist of 15,000 all ranks, and the following units and formations were to be raised —

3 Guerilla Regiments .

Gandhi Guerilla Regiment
Azad Guerilla Regiment
Nehru Guerilla Regiment

1 Special Service Group — Bahadur
1 Intelligence Group
1 Reinforcement Group
1 Regt of Field Force — 1st Hind Field Force
1 Artillery Unit
1 Armoured Fighting Vehicles Unit
1 Engineering Unit
1 M T Coy
1 Medical Aid Party
1 Base Hospital
1 Officers Training school

Headquarters I N A. with General Staff and other administrative departments, including propaganda department

All details of arms and equipment, strength and organisation, allotment of vehicles were worked out entirely by the General Staff branch of H Q, I N A

The officers training school was established to train officer from amongst civilians and other ranks of the Army in view of the further expansion of the I.N A All instructors were Officers of the Indian Army.

As far as possible old Indian Army units were not broken up, but were absorbed in the various units of the I N A as far as possible as a whole. Certain amount of reshuffling of officers was, inevitable, which was done

The officers and men who did not join the I N. A were put under the control of a separate Head Quarter for prisoners of War camps. This Head Quarter was under the command of Major A B Mirza, Bahawalpore State Forces, who received all instructions from H Q. I.N A.

Organizations I.I.L, Centres and Training of Indian Civilians.

After the Bangkok conference, under the auspices of the Council of Action, I I L. centres in East Asia were reorganised according to the resolution passed at the Conference Chairmen were appointed for each I I L Branch and a Committee of local civilians was formed The mine work of these committees was to look after the welfare and relief of Indians residing in their respective areas These Committees also looked after the allotment and requisition of labour demanded by the Japanese.

No particular training on Military Lines was carried out by these committees in their respective areas, though lectures and meetings were held to make the local Indians into better citizens. It was decided by the Council of Action to open a training centre at Kuala Lumpur for the training of civilians for the I N A A school was opened in Penang to train civilians in civic duties and other administrative jobs On passing out, these cadets were sent to various districts in Malaya to promote and help the local committees in their work.

It was decided by the General Staff of the I N A, after consultation with Senior Officers, that the training of the I. N A should be resumed on the same lines as the Indian Army as all the arms and the equipment given to the I.N.A by the Japanese were of the Indian Army and English Army pattern. It was decided not to follow the Japanese method of training but to adopt such methods of training which were more suited to the Indian soldier, and superior to that of the Indian Army, and would, therefore, be useful in our new role as member of the I N A The policy for the training of the I. N A was laid down by the General Staff, but Unit Commanders were given a free hand in the training of their Units in accordance with their role in battle Lack of training books and experience hampered the training to an extent, but gradually Officers worked out their own methods of training The General Staff of the I N A. subsequently published training manuals and pamphlets to help and guide the Officers.

Stress was laid on developing the national spirit amongst all ranks The sense of slavery which was embedded in the minds of the men of the Indian Army and the mercenary spirit which proved to be a stumbling block were the first obstacles to be removed. Officers were especially instructed to impress upon the men under their command that they were Indians and that the I N A was an Army of the Indians, officered and manned by Indians, whose sole object was to help India in the fight for freedom, and this could only be achieved by developing a high sense of honour, responsibility, and national spirit

The ranks were also trained and taught that they were Indians first irrespective of class and creed, and gradually separate cook-houses and other religious barriers were done away with in the I. N. A Every sepoy and officer, no matter to what class and creed he belonged, lived, ate and worked together

English words of command were abolished and words of command in Hindustani were adopted The Congress flag was adopted as the standard of the I N A

As far as possible no help in training was obtained from the Japanese.

My Recall to Singapore in September 1942

In September 1942, I was recalled to Singapore and posted as Second in Command to Col Bhagat at the Officer Training School Later, on the transfer of Col Bhagat, I was appointed Commandant of the O. T S which started functioning in November, 1942, and was disbanded after a few days by the order of General Mohan Singh.

In my opening address to the Cadets I said that independence was our birth-right, and to achieve this object we had to fight the British and later we must be prepared to fight the Japanese too if they showed any intention of dominating India. I told them that the ex-Army men were quite justified in joining the *Fauj* as their oath of loyalty was to their Country, and that they were certainly entitled to go their own way and implement their oath of service

to their country as best as they could. I told them that if they decided in favour of joining the *Fauj* as the best way of serving their country's interest they were thoroughly justified in joining up I went on to say that India had outlived the smashing up of her repeated yearning for freedom, and that despite 150 years of foreign domination, she still yearned for her freedom, and yearned with greater intensity than ever before in India I told them she witnessed her best sons and daughters being ground down in poverty and misery for the crime of seeking to their motherland All of us who were fighting for the same cause were destined to the same ignoble fate at the hands of the same torturer And yet, always a new generation had drawn unquenchable hope from the graves of the dead, and fought the same fight all over again And cycle of fight and death had gone on and on, never ending, inexhaustible Upto this time we had refused to be cowed down With indomitable persistency we had kept alight the fire of liberty in our hearts We had been reduced to a Nation of 'Clerks and Coolies', but the fire within still burnt bright. Millions of our countrymen had been killed by famine and flood year after year and yet we had managed to pass on the tiny spark of liberty to our children and grand-children And, again and again that tiny spark had burst out into flames. Once again we were summoned by history to play our part in a conflagration And, we were once again ready to make ourselves living torches to set alight the walls of that vicious prison into which British Imperialism had converted our country

Personally, even at this stage, I was not fully convinced of Japanese sincerity and my object was to create such a spirit among the officers atleast that they would always be prepared to turn round and fight the Jananese, the moment they felt that the Japanese had any intentions of dominating India.

Visit to P of W Camp,

One of the first things I did on arrival in Singapore was to visit all the prisoners of War Camps Although I was a member

of the I N A, I had full sympathy with those prisoners of War who had refused to join the I N. A. In fact, originally it was with the intention of protecting them that I had joined the I. N A I found that during my absence they had been subjected to a certain amount of maltreatment and large numbers of them, specially the officers, were in Separation Camps

At Seleter Camp approximately 6000 of them had signed up as volunteers in the I N A in order to avoid hardship and with intention of obtaining arms and turning round against the I N A I did not like this as I had always felt that it was useless to enlist unwilling volunteers in the I N A., as there would always be the danger of their letting us down at critical time I, therefore, went and reported this to the G O C. Gen Mohan Singh, who refused to admit that any force or coercion was being used to enlist volunteers for the I N A I took him to Seleter, where after talking to the officers he was convinced and he ordered lists of all such volunteers to be torn up.

The actual facts were that the local Indian camp Commandants, in order to impress General Mohan Singh with their hard work, wished to produce long lists of volunteers and in their enthusiasm far exceeded their powers and it is quite likely that the full facts of such cases never even reached General Mohan Singh

The Dilemma

From the day that we first came in contact with the Japanese most of us developed a great dislike of Japanese methods of dealing with people whose cause they professed to champion This dislike intensified when we saw with our own eyes the organised looting and raping indiscriminately indulged in by Japanese soldiers We often asked ourselves "Is the same thing going to happen in India when we take the Japanese with us?" In addition to this, the more we dealt with the Japanese the more suspicious we grew of their real intentions on India For example, when we first organised the I N A, they issued guns to the I. N A without any optical or mechanical instruments without which it was not

possible to fire these guns with any degree of accuracy And,-no ammunition of any was entrusted to the I N. A. tanks and armoured cars were fit only for ceremonial parades and propaganda photographs. In fact any one with any knowledge of modern weapons could see that the Japanese were deliberately not issuing proper arms and equipment to the I N. A. and without essential equipment it was not possible for any army to succeed against a well equipped modern fighting force. Perhaps, the Japs never intended that the I. N. A should be used for active fighting At any rate that was the impression we felt that the Japanese were frightened of making the I N. A too powerful as they did not trust it This attitude made us suspicious of the Japanese and we began to lose confidence in them and doubted their professed intentions

We also knew that the Indian National Congress was very strongly opposed to the expansionist policy of Japan, and that they would be opposed to any scheme which would bring Japan on Indian Soil But, on the other hand, Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose in his broadcasts from Berlin was urging us to advance on India and destroy British Imperialism. We were also aware of the events that were taking place in Bengal and Bihar and the ruthless measures that the British were adopting to suppress the 1942 disturbances.

We were thus in a dilemma We did not know which was the right course to follow In fact, we were not sure whether, when we arrived in India accompanied by the Japanese, the people would welcome us or spit on our faces

It was at this stage, early in August 1942, that Gen Mohan Singh sent Col. Gill with a few selected and trustworthy officers to the Burma Front with the object of getting them to infiltrate into India These officers, it was intended, should contact Indian Leaders and inform us of the true state of feeling in the country. The part was well equipped with radio transmitting sets and other essential equipment.

On arrival at the front, however, a very prominent member of the party and a close and a trusted friend of Gen. Mohan

Singh betrayed the rest of the party by communicating with the British Forces and going over to them. On arrival in India, this Officer is said to have concocted hair-raising stories of his heroic escape from Singapore He also brought away with him some very secret I.N.A documents and records, and he was rewarded for his treachery to his comrades and country by being awarded the much-coveted honour of being made a Member of the British Empire. Poor Col Gill was so heart-broken that he gave up the attempt and returned to Singapore in disgust As a result of this incident the Japanese grew even more suspicious of the I.N A., and a feeling of mutual distrust grew up between the two armies. Another crisis came about some weeks later which culminated in the dissolution of the first I.N.A and the arrest of General Mohan Singh.

Crisis in the I N A. and the I. I League.

Early in January 1942, a party of Officers and men from Kuala Lumpur, under Major Ram Swarup, was sent by Gen Mohan Singh to work with the Japanese Forces operating in Burma. Ever since then these parties had been operating in various sectors on the Burma Front The Japanese had divided these men into small groups of 8-10 men and placed them directly under the command of a Japanese officer and attached them to a Japanese. The Japanese used these men for propaganda work and as spies.

When Col. Gill arrived in Burma, he saw all this and greatly resented Indian soldier being placed directly under the command of Japanese Officers He also gathered from his conversation with Japanese G.H Q Staff Officers that they intended to use the I N.A. in a similar role when the main body arrived in Burma

Earlier in October 1942, an advance party of all I N.A. Units had been sent to Rangoon to go and arrange for the reception of the I.N A which was due to arrive there in November or December 1942.

Another episode of some considerable interest took place in Rangoon in October 1942. The Indians, in accordance with the resolution passed at the Bangkok conference, asked the Japanese to hand

over the property of absentee Indians to the Indian Independence League. The Japanese, who had taken control of all this property, refused to part with it. When the Indians insisted, Mr Yutani, a Japanese political advisor to the Iwakuro Kikan told the members of the League that the question of Indian Independence was all nonsense as for as the Japanese were concerned; and that they must not ask for too many concessions This was a real eye-opener to those who believed in the sincerety of Japanese promises

On return to Singapore from Burma Col Gill apprised Gen. Mohan Singh of the situation in Burma and strongly advised him not to send any more troops there unless the Bangkok Conference resolution was officially ratified by the Japanese Government He warned Gen Mohan Singh that the Japanese were only out to exploit Indians At last Gen. Mohan Singh, who had done so much for the Japanese in the battles of Malaya and Burma and who had trusted the Japanese implicitly in the initial stages, began also to doubt the real intentions of the Japanese. It was decided that no more troops should be sent to Burma until the resolutions passed at Bangkok Conference were officially ratified by the Japanese Government. At the time that this decision was taken by Gen Mohan Singh Japanese ships were waiting in the harbour to transport units of the I N A from Singapore to Burma.

The refusal to despatch these units to the front at this juncture was too great a responsibility to be borne by one man, and so Gen Mohan Singh requested the president to call a meeting of the "Council of Action" which was the supreme directing body for the I N A. and the Indian Independence League At the meeting, in addition to all Gen Iwakuro, Head of the Japanese Liaison Organisation was also present. Mr. Raghvan asked Gen Mohan Singh why he had despatched I N.A troops (Advance Party) to Burma without referring the matter to the "Council of Action" because the question of employing the I N A in operational areas was a very vital question concerning India and the Indian Independence Movement Gen Mohan Singh could give no satisfactory reply, and apologised for not inform-

ing the "Council of Action", and promised in future to refer all such matters to the Council.

The "Council of Action" then expressed the opinion that the *Iwakuro-Kikan* (Japanese Liaison Department) were interfering too much in the affairs of the I. N. A. and the I.I.L., and that they were trying to use the Indian Movement for the purposes of Japan's aggressive intention of India The Council firmly resolved to resist all such designs, and to run the Indian Independence movement themselves without Japanese control or interference, and in the best interests of India.

Sri K P. K. Menon, a very fearless and patriotic civilian member of the "Council of Action", then printed out that the Bangkok Conference had been held five months ago and the Japanese Government had not yet officially ratified its resolutions. One of the essential preliminaries for the resolutions to be put into effect was that these should first be officially ratified by the Japanese Government. Sri Menon pointed out that I. N A had been raised illegally and its activities should be suspended forthwith.

In the meantime a serious crisis had also arisen in the I I League as a result of the Swaraj Institute incident, which was briefly as follows: Mr Raghvan had started an institution at Penang with the object of training young Indians for national service Patriotism with the object of training young Indians for National Service Patriotism trained in sabotage work and were taught *Nippongo* One night early in November 1942, some Japanese Army Officers, accompanied by *Iwakuro-Kikan* officials, came to the Institute, gathered the boys, picked out the most promising, herded them into lorries and drove away. Despite the most strenuous efforts of Mr. Raghvan it could not be found out who was responsible for the removal of the boys nor could their whereabouts be discovered The "Council of Action" formally protested to the Japanese General Head Quarters but no satisfactory reply was forthcoming. Eventually, Mr Raghvan threatened to close the institution unless the Japanese gave a public undertaking that such incidents would never be

repeated, and that the boys who had been taken away would be returned to the institute. This was a very bold step for a civilian to take. The Japanese as a nation do not believe in allowing any of their subjects to raise their voice against the State and it was, therefore, feared that the Japanese "Gestapo" would probably quietly do away with Mr Raghvan. But, this brave man was not to be deterred Eventually, the Japanese were forced to admit that the boy had been taken away by the Japanese. Mr. Raghvan publicly condemned this high-handed action of the Japanese and told the *Kikan* that his institution was not a factory for producing spies for the Japanese He told them that no Indian could be forced to work with the Japanese Army against his will, and in facts, he had advised all Indians to refrain from doing so unless the "Council of Action" gave the lead

Eventually, on the 29th November, 1942, Mr. Raghvan closed the Swaraj Institute as a protest against the high-handed action of the Japanese The Japanese greatly resented this, and declared that it was an insult to their Emperor. They then interned Mr Raghvan in his house in Penang and no one was allowed to see him. The arrest of Mr. Raghvan, who was the head of the Malayan Branch of the Indian Independence League, had a very depressing effect on the Indians in Malaya

Such was the atmosphere in which the "Council of Action" met at Singapore and submitted a momorandum to the Japanese Government putting forward their demands and asking for an unequivocal reply by the Japanese Government to the Bangkok Conference resolutions They warned the Japanese that if no satisfactory reply was received within a fortnight they would dissolve the I. N. A and the I. I. L.

Gen Iwakuro, however, advised the "Council of Action" that it was not proper for them to submit such a strong memorandum to the Japanese Government, and that it was likely to be interpreted as an 'Ultimatum'. On this the Council decided to withdraw the memorandum, and Gen. Iwakuro undertook to get an early reply

from the Japanese Government for which purpose he sent special envoy to Saigon and Tokyo.

On this representation Premier Tojo issued a general statement that the Japanese had no territorial ambitions over India. But this did not satisfy the Council of Action and the original Memorandum was again submitted to Gen. Iwakuro for despatch to the Japanese Government. The main demands contained in the Memorandum were:- (1) The official ratification of Bangkok Conference Resolution (2) Cessation of all unnecessary interference in the affairs of the I. N. A. and I. I. L by the Japanese, and (3) The Indian Prisoners of War to continue to be under the command of Gen. Mohan Singh.

In October 1942, after the formation of the I. N. A., a new Japanese department took over control of all those Indian Prisoners of War who had either refused to volunteer for the I. N. A. or had not been absorbed in the I. N. A. Gen. Mohan Singh wished to keep them under his command, as he felt that these prisoners of war would serve as a reserve for the I. N. A. The Japanese however refused to agree to these demands and a fresh crisis arose. Gen. Mohan Singh called a meeting of all senior I. N. A. officers and asked their views on the subject. They were unanimously of the opinion that we should insist on our demands, and if the Japanese did not agree, we should disband the I. N. A.

On December 8th. 1942, the Japanese, probably on the suspicion that he was at the back of the crisis, arrested Col. Gill. They said that he was a British spy and that it was due to his instigation that Major Dhillion had deserted from Burma. He also arrested all the other members of the party which accompanied him to Burma with the object of contacting Indian Leaders.

Following the arrest of Col. Gill all the members of the "Council of Action" resigned. In the Army the feeling was growing that the Japanese had definitely gone back on their word, and that we should have nothing to do with them. I, as well as the other members of my block, who had never any faith in the

Japanese, considered this an ideal opportunity for ending all co-operation with the Japanese. We started an intensive propaganda campaign against the I. N. A. and advised Gen. Mohan Singh to dissolve the I. N. A

Mr. Rash Behari Bose, who was president of the "Council of Action" was, however, of the opinion that all the difficulties and obstacles in the way of the Indian Independence movement could be removed by direct negotiations with the Japanese Government. He volunteered to proceed to Tokyo and settle all differences with Premier Tojo, and he advised Gen. Mohan Singh to exercise patience. But Gen. Mohan Singh and other members of the "Council of Action" refused to listen to him and the situation started deteriorating daily.

About the middle of December, 1942, Mr. Rash Behari Bose tried to improve matters He wrote a letter to Gen. Mohan Singh and asked him to send some senior Officers to meet him at his residence in Singapore so that he could explain the situation to them. Gen. Mohan Singh, however, sent a very curt reply stating that no officer liked to see him, and Gen. Mohan Singh would allow no one to go and see him. On this Mr Rash Behari Bose asked the Japanese to issue orders for the arrest of Gen. Mohan Singh. Consequently, Gen. Iwakuro sent for Gen. Mohan Singh on the 20th December 1942, and placed him under arrest. In the initial stages the treatment meted out to him by the Japanese was satisfactory. He was given a separate bungalow on St. John Island, near Singapore, and he was allowed personal staff of seven officers and men, including two A.D Cs., cooks and orderlies He was later transferred to Sumatra where, on the arrival of the British Forces, he reported to them and was brought to the Red Fort of Delhi. General Mohan Singh, who had anticipated his arrest, had issued secret instructions prior to his arrest, ordering the commanders to dissolve the I.N.A. as soon as he was arrested. These instructions were carried out as soon as it was known that he had been arrested. All arms were collected and dumped by Units, all party badges of rank were burnt, and all military training was suspended.

At this time feeling ran very high against the Japanese and almost all officers and men decided never again to trust the Japanese

A letter was addressed to the Japanese Liaison Department (Iwakuro-Kikan) by the I.N A informing them of the decision of all officers and men to be reverted to the status of Prisoners of War. The Japanese, however, refused to recognise them as such, and said that as far as the Japanese were concerned, Indian Prisoners of War had been declared free persons once and, therefore, could not be classified as Prisoners of War again. When we expressed our intentions of exercising our right as free persons to leave our camps, and either to march to India, or settle down as civilians in Malaya, Thailand and Burma, the Japs refused to allow us to leave our camp

Mr. Rash Behari Bose maintained that Gen Mohan Singh had a perfect right to resign from the command of the I. N A; but he had no right to dissolve the I.N A as it did not belong to him personally It was India's army and *not* Gen. Mohan Singh's He also made a formal declaration that he had ordered Gen Mohan Singh to be arrested, and he had been deprived of his rank of General, which rank Mr R B Bose had bestowed upon him, when he was appointed to the Command of the Indian National Army

This state of affairs lasted for approximately two months In the meantime, an intensive propaganda campaign was started by Mr. R. B. Bose and the Japanese to induce officers and men to continue in the I N.A., which most of them did not wish to do at this stage The Japanese had, however, found a few Junior Officers who were prepared to work for them, and with the help of these officers they tried to raise a puppet I N A.

Lectures by General Iwakuro at Bidadiri

In February 1943, after the Japanese had carried out a thorough propaganda campaign, the Japanese General Iwakuro, Head of the Liaison Department, called a meeting of all I. N A.

officers, approximately 300, at Bidadari and delivered a speech. The salient points of his speech were —

(a) That, the I. N A had been raised as a result of the decision taken by the Indian delegates who had assembled at Bangkok as representatives of Indian residents of East Asia.

(b) That, the Japanese government sympathised with the desire of Indians to fight for the liberation of their country, and had granted travel facilities to the delegates to meet at Bangkok and to decide on the ways and means of conducting their campaign of liberation

(c) That, a "Council of Action" was elected by the delegates with Mr. R B Bose as the President; and Bose had nominated Capt. Mohan Singh to command the I N. A.

(d) That, tho Japanese Government had given a promise of all-out aid to the President.

(e) That, Gen Mohan Singh could, if he so chose, resign Command of the I. N. A. but he had no authority to disband the I N. A, without the sanction of the President, and that any attempt at disorganising it would be treated as mutiny.

This was a very critical time and it was obvious that the Japanese were determined to keep the I N A going, if necessary by use of sheer force, and that they were looking for a few ring-leaders whom they wished to make scape-goats to frighten others so that they would continue in the I N. A Everyone present, realising Japanese intentions and their unreasonable attitude, decided to remain quiet I could not stand this and replied to Gen Iwakuro. I made him admit that the I N A. had been raised by the Japanese by the use of force, deceit, and coercion and that the

people who had gone to Bangkok were not our representatives, and, as such, although legally we were bound by the Bangkok Conference Resolutions, normally the Japanese had no justification for forcing us to continue in such a moment, because in a holy movement for securing India's Independence there was no place for deceit and coercion He agreed with this and as a result everyone was allowed a free choice of either continuing in the I N A or going out of it.

The next day I was sent for by Gen. Iwakuro at his bungalow for a "heart to heart talk", as he called it. He told me that he had fully appreciated my arguments at the previous day's meeting and was anxious that a man like me should take up the leaderhip of the I.N.A. He asked me if I would accept it. I told him that I would *not* because I did not feel I had the necessary ability or the following, and that the people had lost all faith and confidence both in the Japanese and in our own leaders.

He then requested me to give him my views on how a real and true I N.A. could be raised—a I N.A. which people would be willing to join I made the following suggestions:—

(a) That, the question of Indian Independence should be treated as something sacred, and everything pertaining to at should be based on truth and on unshakeable foundations, that the Japanese must not attempt to exploit us for their own ends.

(b) That, there must be no coercion to induce anyone to join it, and that anyone who came forward must do so of his own free will, and after fully realising the consequences of doing so. I also suggested that people wishing to leave the I.N A should be treated kindly.

(c) Finally, I told him that there was only one men outside India who could start a real I.A.N.. and that was Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. I insisted that by the real I N.A. I meant that it should be a for-

midable fighting force and not merely a propaganda army.

He agreed with me and assured me that he would try his best to make arrangements for Netaji to come to Singapore from Germany. I informed him that a large number of officers and men would be willing to continue in the I.N.A. on the express condition that Netaji would be coming to Singapore, and until the time of his arrival on troops should be moved out of the island. It was on this condition that I decided to continue in the I.N.A and was appointed Chief of General staff to the Director of the Military Bureau.

In reorganising the I.N.A. we set out to ensure that:—

(a) Any one who wished to leave the I.N.A. was free to be so without any fear of reprisals against him.

(b) Those who remained in the I.N.A. were to be prepared even to fight against the Japanese, if they proved dishonest.

(c) That the Japanese shall not exploit us for their own benefit.

By this time the Japanese had taken over all the non-Volunteers under their direct control and our main worry was the treatment that would be meted out to the officers and men who had decided not to rejoin the I.N.A. after the crisis. We feared that they would be sent to the Pacific Islands where the conditions were bound to be very unpleasant.

During the period of the crisis and after the arrest of Gen. Mohan Singh, Mr. R. B Bose appointed a committee of officers to carry on the administration of all I.N.A. Camps and to maintain strict discipline among the troops The Committee consisted of. Lt Col A.D. Loganadhan, Lt Col. J.K. Bhonsle, Lt. Col. M. Z. Kiani, and Lt. Col. Ehsan Qadir. This committee continued to function until the reorganisation of the I N. A.

Reorganization of the I. N. A

It was realized by everyone that the greatest weakness in the first I. N A. was that it was entirely a one-man show ; and there-

ore in order to organise a second I N A. on a more democratic basis it was decided to institute a Directorate of Military Bureau, which would control all the activities of the I N A. The Director of the Military Bureau was a Military Officer directly under the President of I I. L In addition to this, it was decided to set up an Army Head Quarter under an Army Commander who would command the combatant units of the I N A in the field The President appointed Col J K Bhonsle as the Director of Military Bureau, and Col' M Z. Kiani as the Army Commander.

All those who were not willing to continue in the I N A. were given an opportunity of reverting to the status of a Prisoner of War, and about 3000 Officers and men took advantage of this. In the reorganized I N A these members were made up from amongst new volunteers from amongst Prisoners of War and Civilian recruits who were forthcoming in large numbers The Japanese officially recognised the I N A as an allied Army, equal in rank and status to the Japanese Army They also promised to ratify the Bangkok Conference Resolutions

A meeting of delegates from all over East Asia held to formulate plans for the reorganization of the I I L, and an Advisory Council was set up to assist the President It was also announced at this meeting that, on arrival in the Far East, Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose would take over the Presidentship of the I. I. L.

A sketch showing the reorganisation of the Indian Independence Movement and the Indian National Army will be found in these Pages

Even after the reorganization of the I. N. A the Japanese did not give up their original game of exploitation In fact, they tried to intensify it and weaken the resistence to this exploitation by the I. N. A and the I I L They realized that Gen. Mohan Singh had been successful in creating a crisis, because he had been given too much power. They, therefore, placed a scheme before Mr. Rash Behari by which they succeeded in splitting the I N A. into two distinct parts

(1) The Directorate of Military Bureau with General Bhonsle at its head. This Directorate controlled the general policy and finances of the I N. A. It was under the President of the I. I L, Mr. Rash Behari Bose, who had no direct contact with the troops.

(2) The Army, with Gen. M Z. Kiani as its Commander, who was responsible for its administration, training and discipline

Thus the previous functions of Gen. Mohan Singh were distributed between two I. N A. commanders This was not all The Japanese, realizing that the Indian Officers were too cute for them and would never agree to Japanese exploitation started training centres where Civilian Volunteers were trained for various duties, the most important of which was to supply recruits for the I. N A These camps were directly under the I. I. L and had Japanese Officers as supervisors. Col Ehsan Qadir was put in command of these camps. All the instructors were I. N A officers and men In some camps civilians were also employed to give political training to recruits. All these camps came directly under the president of the I. I. L. and not the I. N. A

We, in the I. N, A. suspected that the Japanese were attempting to raise an I N. A. from amongst the civilian population with the object of having a parallel organization to the I N A. and which, if the I N.A. gave any more trouble, could replace it Thus, in the I N A., the Japanese were trying to play with three different Officers at the same time They did their best to play one Indian Officer against the other, but, thanks to their integrity and to their loyalty to their country, the Indian Officers staunchly refused to become stooges of the Japanese and were able to resist all Japanese attempts at creating ill-feeling between the three heads of the I N.A and thereby facilitate its exploitation by them

Against the Indian Independence League, which together with all its branches in Malaya had taken a prominent part in the crisis,

they set up an organisation called the Indian Youth League This youth Movement was launched with the *Kikan's* secret support and was little more than a pocket borough of the Japanese. They conducted a villifying campaign against the civilian members of the "Council of Action", which resigned in December, 1940, in order to stop the Japanese exploitation of Indians.

Thus, even after the reorganization of the I.N A. and I.I.L., the Japanese still continued to interfere in their affairs with the difference that they did not do it so openly as before They only changed the method of approach, but the position continued to remain unsatisfactory. All these weaknesses were pointed out by General J.K Bhonsle to Mr. R. B Bose, who fought valiantly against it in order to put an end to it He always advised us not to create any more trouble, as the time factor was a very important one in our coming struggle, and that Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose was coming in the near future This state of affairs lasted from March 1943 to July 1943, when Netaji arrived to take charge of the Indian Independence Movement from Sri Rash Behari Bose

Sri Rash Behari Bose.

After throwing a bomb on Lord Hardinge in 1911, this great revolutionary had escaped to Japan and found shelter under Mr Toyama, who was a spiritual leader of the Japanese. He had been in Japan for approximately 30 years, when the greater East Asia war began and gave him the real opportunity for which he had waited so long Even before the outbreak of the war he had been constantly carrying on his revolutionary activities with the object of bringing about the emancipation of his motherland, which he loved so dearly He was responsible for organising the "*Kama-Gata-Maru* Expedition" in 1921, where he succeeded in procuring a ship load of arms and ammunition and tried to sumggle it inside India in a Japanese ship, called the *Kama-Gata-Maru* Unfortunately, the plan was discovered by the British and *Kama-Gata-Maru* and all the Indian revolutionaries who were on board and all arms and ammunitions were captured by the British.

By his timely and far sighted step in contacting the Japanese Vice-Foreign Minister and Field Marshal Sugiyama, Chief of Japanese Imperial General Staff, and getting them to agree *not* to treat Indians in Japanese occupied territories as enemy subjects, he saved the life, property and honour of the thousands of his countrymen residing in the East, and earned their everlasting gratitude.

Netaji used to say that when they were children, Sri Rash Behari Bose was looked upon as a national hero, whose name used to inspire the younger generation.

He remained the same great revolutionary throughout his life.

He was absolutely incorruptible and held the honour and prestige of his country above every thing else The fact that he had been in Japan for over 30 years with a price of one lakh of rupees which the British had placed on his head, dead or alive, and that he had married a Japanese wife from a very high and respectable family, did not make the slightest difference to his patriotism.

He probably knew the Japanese better than any other Indian residing in East Asia, and he had considerable influence among the higher Japanese Military and political circles.

It is a peculiar custom in the Japanese Army that the local Commanders, irrespective of how small they are, are given very wide powers and each one of them feels that it is his personal duty to achieve something great in helping Japan to win the War.

It was under this feeling that the Japanese Liaison Officers of the Hirakari -Kikan used methods which suggested that the Japanese were out to exploit us and it was not surprising that the Indian officers did not trust them and very frequently lost patience with them. But, Mr Rash Behari Bose, who knew the Japanese so well, was always confident that he would be able to remedy all our difficulties by contacting the Japanese High Command in Tokyo It was because of this that he advised us to have more patience

On 4th July, 1943, he very gladly handed over the charge of the Indian Independence Movement to Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose and retired to have a well-deserved rest

He died in Tokyo in January 1945 at the age of 62.

Initially about 17,000 officers and men volunteered to join the I N.A They signed the declaration to join the I N A unconditonally, under the command of Capt Mohan Singh who was appointed G O.C., I N A.

The H Q of the I N.A. was established in Bidadari camp in the month of September 1942

It was agreed by Capt Mohan Singh and the senior officers of the I N.A that the officers of the I N A who were holding commissions in the British Indian Army would relinquish them and would be given commissions in the I N A subject to the approval of the President of the "Council of Action" Accordingly, all officers ceased to wear badges of rank of the Indian Army and subsequently they were all Gazetted Second Lieutenants of the I N A Gradually they were promoted to senior ranks according to their old seniority

The Head Quarters I N A was officially established on the 1st September, 1942 Captain Mohan Singh assumed command of the I N A with Col N S. Gill as Supreme Advisor and Col M Z Kiani as Chief of Staff

ARRIVAL OF NETAJI SUBHAS BOSE IN EAST ASIA

After the crisis in the Indian National Army, General Iwakuro, Head of the Japanese Liaison Department known as Iwakuro Kikan, managed to convince his Government that it was not possible to raise a real I. N. A without the personal assistance and guidance of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. He, therefore, requested his Government to make arrangements for Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose to come from Berlin to Singapore and take over the personal leadership of the I N. A He was informed by his Government that it was not possible for Subhas Chandra Bose to come as the journey was most hazardous and that there were only five per cent chance of his coming through it alive The Japanese Government advised Gen Iwakuro not to insist on it as it would entail the almost certain death of Mr. Bose. The journey, they said, was to be performed by submarine and as all sea routes were constantly patrolled by British and American warships there was practically no chance of the submarine getting through undetected General Iwakuro again wrote to his Government insisting that it was imperative in interests of the Indian Independence Movement that Netaji should undertake this journey however hazardous it may be He assured them it was not possible for the Japanese to do anything substantial for Indian Independence without his personal guidance in the Far East. He wrote. "I know there are impossible odds against his coming through safely, but all Indians here feel that without his guidance they cannot launch powerful struggle to secure India's liberation. If he cannot come through safely, then we would have to resign to the belief that Providence does not wish India to be free. If, on the other hand, inspite of all the perils *en route* he comes

through safely, then we would know that it is the will of God that India should achieve independence through his efforts "

In any case, he asked the Japanese Government to inform Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose of the wishes of Indians in East Asia and the risks involved in undertaking this journey and let him make a decision himself The Japanase Government agreed to this

Consequently, the Japanese Ambassador in Berlin approached Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose and acquainted him with the wishes of Indians in East Asia, and the dangers that lay ahead of him in undertaking the journey He frankly informed Netaji that there were only five percent chances of his getting through safely and advised him not to take the risk as his life was too valuable Netaji replied that he would very willingly undertake the journey inspite of the dangers on the way, and even if he was killed he would have the satisfaction of knowing that he died striving for the independence of India and would welcome such a death

Accordingly, it is reliably learnt, he left Germany on board a German submarine which brought him as far as the seas round Madagascar where a Japanese submarine, which had gone from Penang (Malaya) across the Indian Ocean to meet the German submarine, took him on board and brought him back to Penang from where he flew by plane to Tokyo.

On June 3, 1943, Sri Rash Behari Bose left Singapore for Tokyo to meet Netaji there and bring him to Singapore The night before his departure Sri Rash Behari Bose gave a dinner party to several I N.A Officers The news of the arrival of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose was kept a closely guarded secret When asked about the purpose of his visit to Tokyo, Sri Rash Behari Bose told the Officers he was going to Tokyo to bring back a present for them

On June 20, 1943, it was announced by Tokyo Radio that Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose had arrived there Throughout his journey from Berlin to Tokyo, Netaji was accompanied by a Muslim youngman by the name of Mr Abid Ali Hasan who was acting as his A.D.C It is learnt that Tokyo gave a very rousing reception,

worthy of a great revolutionary leader, who had defied the might of British Imperialism so many times

On the day of his arrival in Tokyo, Netaji issued an important Press statement in the course of which he said, "During the last World War leaders had been bluffed and deceived by the British politicians, and that was why we took the vow more than 20 years ago never again to be deceived by them For many years my generation has striven for freedom and eagerly awaited the hour that has now struck—the hour that is for the Indian people the dawn of freedom We know very well such an opportunity will not come again for another hundred years and we are therefore determined to make the fullest use of it. British Imperialism has meant for India moral degradation, cultural ruin, economic impoverishment and political enslavement. It is our duty to pay for our liberty with our own blood The freedom that we so win through our sacrifice and exertions we shall be able to preserve with our strength The enemy that has drawn the sword must be fought with the sword Civil disobedience must develop into an armed struggle. And only when Indian people receive the baptism of fire on a large scale will they qualify for their freedom"

On June 21, 1943, Netaji broadcast his first speech over the Tokyo Radio. This speech was relayed in all I.N.A. Camps. Netaji declared

"So far as India is concerned what is most important to all of us is the situation near India During the whole history of the British in India, it had not struck one single British General that at any stage in the future, some enemy of the British may appear on the eastern frontier of India The whole attention of Britain's military strategists has, therefore, been concentrated on the North-west Frontier of India. With the naval fortress of Singapore in their possession, our rulers thought that India was safe in their hands. The dynamic advance of General Yamashita had opened the eyes of the world to the worthlessness of British strategy Since then General Wavell has been making feverish attempts to put up fortifications on the eastern frontier of India

But what the Indian people are asking is this ' If it took them almost 20 years to build Singapore, and only one week to lose it, how long will it take the British C-in-C or his successor to withdraw from his fortifications?' To us Indians, what is of primary importance is not what is happening in Tunis, Tumbuctoo, Lampedusa, or Alaska, but what is happening inside India and across our frontier What is of primary importance to us is the much-advertised re-conquest of Burma which has ended in shameful retreat Even the fall of Singapore and the loss of Burma, the greatest disasters in British military history, could not bring about any appreciable change British Imperialism remains inexorable Men may come and men may go, empires may come and empires may go, but British Imperialism goes on for ever—that is what our rulers continue to think .You may call it lack of statesmanship or political bankruptcy or midsummer madness, but this midsummer madness has its own explanation The British Empire has grown out of India The British people know, no matter to which political party they belong, that they need to reap all the resources of India To them, Empire means India They are now fighting madly to preserve that Empire Consequently, no matter what fate besets Britain during the course of this War, the Englishman will endeavour to the very last to keep his Emipre ..i.e to hold on to India Therefore, if I may speak frankly, we see that it is not midsummer madness that British politicians refuse to recognise plight, it is midsummer madness that we should expect Englishmen voluntarily to give up his Empire No Indian should ever cherish the illusion that one day England will be induced to recognise India's independence But that is not to say that British politicians will never again compromise with India Personally, I expected another such attempt sometime this year. But what I want to point out to my countrymen is, that by compromise British politicians will never recognise India's independence, but will only try to bluff the Indian people ...Protracted negotiations are planned to side-track the campaign for independence and thereby undermine the national will, as they did between December 1941 and April 1942 . Therefore, we should, once and for all, give up hope of any compromise

with British Imperialism. Our independence admits of no compromise. Freedom will only be won when British and their Allies quit India for good. And those who really want liberty must fight for it and pay for it with their owm blood Countrymen and friends! Let us, therefore, carry on the fight for liberty, inside India and outside India, with all our strength and vigour. Let us continue the battle with unshakable faith till the day when British Imperialism will be broken up and out of its ashes India will once again emerge an Independent Nation. In this struggle there is no going back, and there can be no faltering We must march onward and forward till Victory is achieved and freedom won".

MOVE OF THE AZAD HIND FAUJ TO BURMA

On the 9th November 1943, having completed its training and to a certain extent its deficiencies in arms and equipment, the first party of the No 1 (Subhas Brigade) Regiment left Taiping by rail for Rangoon The last party left Taiping on the 24th November.

At the time of departure there were some very touching scenes at the railway station All the sick and physically unfit soldiers whom the doctors ordered to be left behind at Taiping came to the station and lay down on rails in front of the railway engine and refused to allow the train to start unless they too were allowed to go to the front. They said, "We have given a pledge to Netaji that we will sacrifce ourselves for the sake of our motherland How then could anyone leave us behind and deny us this privilege?" It was only after a great deal of pursuasion and on an assurance being given that they would be sent up to join the Regiment as soon as they recover, that they allowed the train to proceed

The Regiment moved from Taiping via Penang to Chumpon in Siam (Thailand) by rail, (2) Chumpon—Kawashi (Victoria point) a distance of 90 miles, some by route march and some by motor lorries, (3) Chumpon—Mergui, by steam boats and river craft, (4) Mergui—Tavoy—Ye—mainly on foot, and Ye—Moulmein—Rangoon by train

The main body of the Regiment arrived in Rangoon early in January 1944.

The journey from Taiping to Rangoon, took five weeks during which the men had to cover at least 400 miles on foot Except for a few unarmed encounters with the Japanese, the journey was uneventful. The only extraordinary thing about the journey was that

our soldiers, in their eagerness to reach the front as soon as possible generally covered in two days, the distance which the Japanese soldiers took five days to travel -

Our soldiers carrying an average load of 80 lbs. were covering 25 miles a day. In one or two instances, two of our companies "Parwana" and "Jangju", commanded by Capt Amrik Singh, *Shaheed-e-Bharat,* and Capt Santa Singh respectively covered 38 miles a day

At Waw, approx 20 miles East of Pegu, at 11.00 hrs our train was attacked by British fighter planes. We suffered slight casualties one killed and two wounded, some Japanese who were travelling by the same train also suffered casualties. They had 8 killed and 6 wounded.

Thus Sepoy Jit Singh, a Gharwali, was the first battle "Shaheed" of the Regiment He was cremated with full military honours at Waw.

Stay at Rangoon.

On our arrival at Rangoon, the Regiment (Subhas Brigade) was accommodated in military Barracks at Mingladone, and final preparations for the next move to the front line were taken in hand.

Our difficulties at Rangoon were mainly administrative, which may be summarized as follows:—

(1) TRANSPORT To transport all the Rations, ammunitions, Battle casualties, etc., the Regiment had only 5 lorries, without a proper workshop or the supply of spare parts The Japanese Motor transport companies helped whenever it was possible, but this assistance was very inadequate. Inspite of our most strenuous efforts to induce the Japanese to give us more transport, we were unable to get any. There was even no sack animal transport of any sort The result was that the men had to carry everything, including reserve ammunition, heavy machineguns, and medicines

(2) CLOTHING The I N A, was very deficient of warm clothing It was known that in the area of the Chin Hill and the Kaladan Valley, where the unit was going into action the winter was very severe The men had only one thin cotton blanket and one warm shirt to meet this severe winter.

All efforts to obtain great coats and other warm clothes failed

(3) MOSQUITO NETS It was known that the area in which the Brigade was going to operate, i e, the area of the Kabawa Valley-Ganga Tamu and the Kaladan Valley was infested with the most virulent type of Malaria, and yet proper mosquito nets could not be obtained

(4) EMERGENCY RATIONS We had no emergency rations for the Azad Hind Fauj, But in Rangoon a special type of "Shakarpara Biscuit" emergency rations was prepared for all the soldiers In its preparation Netaji took very keen personal interest

Netaji arrived in Rangoon on the 4th January, 1944, on a Japanese plane, and established his advance Head Quarters there He realized that the time for launching the offensive was very short He took the keenest interest in every sphere of the final preparations for the Regiment to proceed to the front and he did for us everything humanly possible He was up against a stone wall The Japanese were not giving all the assistance to the I.N.A that they could and should have given They made all sorts of vague promises that the I N A would be supplied with everything when it reached the front line, but this, of course, was never done Any how, the main thing was to reach the front-line as soon as possible and launch the offensive The soldiers told Netaji and their officers not to allow any delay by worrying about providing them with warm clothing, transport, etc They were anxious to get to the

front, from where they said they would get every-thing from the "Churchill Supply".

Understanding with the Japanese Army.

Much more important that the administrative problems which confronted the I N A was the question of the basis of cooperation between the INA and the Japanese army.

On the 7th, January, 1944, Netaji went to return the courtesy call on the Japanese Commander-in-Chief in Burma, General Kawabe I also accompanied Netaji on this visit At that meeting the question of the deployment of the I N A. and the basis of cooperation between the I N A and the Japanese army was discussed The Japanese C-in-C told Netaji that the Japanese army was ready to take the offensive as soon as Netaji ordered them to advance. Gen Kawabe's idea was that the I N A forces should be split up into small groups and attached to all the larger Japanese formations

Netaji told him that this was not acceptable to him as the splitting up of the "Subhas Brigade" into small formations would result in the loss of its identity Netaji insisted that no I N A formation should be split into smaller formations than a Battalion and that the command of all I N A. units should remain entirely in the hands of Indian officers This was ultimately agreed to by the Japanese C-in-C It was also agreed that Japanese and I N.A units would follow a common strategy, after it had been previously discussed and agreed to by Netaji and the Japanese C-in-C The I.N A was to be alloted an independent sector of the front It was also agreed that every inch of Indian territory liberated would be handed over to the I N A for administration and Major General Chatterjee was appointed Governor designate of such liberated territories, besides this all captured dumps of arms, ammunition and other stores, including machinery, were to be handed over to the Provisional Government of Azad Hind.

The question of the status of the two armies was also discussed, and it was reaffirmed by Gen Kawabe that the I N A would be

treated as the army of an ally and equal status in every respect It was therefore decided that saluting was to be on a reciprocal basis, that is, junior officers of the either army would satute the senior officer of the other army Another difficult question which arose related to the procedure to be followed in respect of officers of equal rank of the two armies It has to be decided who would salute first— the Indian or the Japanese officer ? The Japanese C-in-C was of the opinion that once the Japanese army was a senior army, I N A. officers should salute first Netaji took up strong objection to this procedure and told the Japanese C-in-C that he could not accept this position because it meant accepting an inferior status as a Nation—a position he was not prepared to accept Netaji, therefore, suggested that when Japanese and an Indian officer of equal rank met they should both salute at the same time This was also agreed to by the Japanese

The question of whether the I N A would be subject to the Japanese Army Act when operating under the direction of the Japanese General Head Quarters was discussed next The Japanese C-in-C informed Netaji that all Allied Armies in East Asia, such as the Manchurian army, the Nanking army, the Burmese army, and the Thai army were all subject to the Japanese Military Law, and that it was only right that the I N A too should be subject to it In actual practice the acceptance of this principle would have meant that the Japanese Military Police would have the authority to arrest any I N A officer or soldier without referring the matter to Netaji Netaji refused to agree to this too He informed the Japanese C-in-C that the I.N A had its own Military Law and Army Act, and that he would not allow the Japanese to interfere in any way with its discipline and regulation The Japanese C-in-C was very upset about this, and said that he had no authority to give a decision on the point. He, however, promised to refer the question to the authorities in Tokyo, but he doubted very much if they would ever accept this Netaji assured him that as far as he was concerned it was a matter of principle, and that he would never accept the Japanese point of view,

Later on, however, Netaji had his own way and the Tokyo Government had to submit to his demand.

Netaji finally summed up the situation by saying that he and other Indians in East Asia looked upon the impending offensive as primarily a battle for India's liberation, and as such, India's honour demanded that Indians themselves should exert their utmost and make supreme sacrifices. He told the Japanese C-in-C that it was his wish that the Indian National Army should form the spearhead of the advance into India, and that the first drop of blood to be shed on Indian soil should be that of a member of the I. N A. He also informed the Japanese C-in-C that he (Netaji) had told his soldiers and his countrymen inside India that the I N A was coming to liberate them from British bondage, and that he had ordered his soldiers to shoot at sight anyone Indian or Japanese, who was seen looting or raping on Indian soil The Japanese C-in-C appreciated these orders and told Netaji that he would issue similar orders to the Japanese Army. Netaji also told General Kawabe that the only flag that would be approved to fly over Indian territory would be the Indian Tricolour. On conclusion of the conference, the Japanese C-in-C assured Netaji that the Japanese arms would give all possible aid and assistance to the I. N A in Burma in all such matters as rations, medicines, evacuation of casualties, etc

Having settled these fundamentals of cooperation between the I.N.A. and the Japanese army, Netaji returned to his Head-Quarters, and devoted himself to the task of providing the Azad Hind Fauj with all its essential requirements He worked day and night, like one inspired, and created a tremendous wave of enthusiasm among the army as well as all the civilian population of East Asia, particularly in Burma, where a considerable number of Indians headed by Messrs Habib Betai and Khanna, gave their all to the Azad Hind Government. These two selfless patriots gave property worth several lakhs and became fakirs for the sake of their country. All that they expected and got was the title of "Sevak-e-Hind"

Netaji also took very keen interest in the welfare of his

men, their food, accommodation, hospital arrangement, etc and very frequently came to inspect them on outdoor training In the meantime he ordered the seat of Provisional Government of Azad Hind and the Supreme Head Quarter of the I N A to be moved to Burma

Azad Hind Fauj proceeds to the Front

On the 24th January, 1944, General Katakura, Chief of the general staff to Japanese C-in-C in Burma, reported to Netaji and explained to him the whole strategy of the impending offensive against the British forces on the Indo-Burma border, and the role that had been assigned to the I N A in the proposed offensive. This meeting, was held behind closed doors and in an atmosphere of absolute secrecy, and there were only three persons present, Netaji, General Katakura and myself Netaji showed an amazing grasp of military science and was able to make a number of observation which were very much appreciated by the Japanese Chief of Staff and subsequently agreed to by the Japanese G H Q At that meeting the General Katakura revealed that it was a part of the Japanese plan to launch a heavy air attack on Calcutta simultaneously with the advance of land forces Netaji expressed himself against this He told the Japanese general that there should be no indiscriminate bombing of Indian civilians as it would lead to much panic and suffering, and woul. probably shake the confidence of the Indian people in him and to this Japanese agreed

After the plan had been fully approved by Netaji, the No 1 (Subhas Brigade) Regiment was placed under the direct command, for purposes of operations only, of the Japanese General Heac Quarters in Burma, which was known as on "Mori Butai"

On the 27th January, 1944, I called on the C-in-C and received final orders for the move to the front The Japanese C-in-C told me that my Brigade (Subhas Brigade) was the first I N A fighting force to go into action and that its activities were going to be watched very keenly by all to see whether the I. N. A. could

bear the same hardship and fight as well as the Japanese army. He said that he was going to put us through all the tests to determine the real fighting qualities of the I N A. I assured him that we were prepared to face any test and bear any hardship, that came our way. He then issued detailed orders regarding the role of No 1 Guerilla Regiment (Subhas Brigade) He began to describe the relative positions and strengths of the British forces, on the Indo-Burma Border and the location and strength of the Japanese and the Indian National Army forces at the front He told me that the main concentration of British and American forces was at Sadiya-Imphal-Tamu and Tiddim, and that they were preparing to attack the Japanese forces with the object of recapturing Burma He told me that there were powerful British forces at Aijal (probably one Brigade) and Lungleh (one Brigade,) which were threatening the left flanks of the Japanese forces, and were in a position to advance to Kalewa and cut off the main Supply line of the Japanese forces, and that the intention of the Japanese army was to attack and capture Tiddim-Tamu and Imphal

The role allotted to the No. 1 Brigade was :—

(a) No 1 Battalion (under command of Major P S Raturi) was to proceed via Prome Taungup-Myo-Haung-Kyauktaw-Paletwa, to operate in the Kaladan valley, where the British had brought their much-praised West African Division

(b) No 2 & 3 Battalions (under command of their respected Battalion Commanders Majors Ran Singh and Padam Singh) were to proceed via Mandalay and Kalewa to the Chin Hill area of Haka and Falam The whole of this column was commanded by me.

Further detailed orders regarding the deployment of the I N. A. were to be issued by the Japanese North Burma Command at Maymyo At the same time some Japanese officers and N. C. Os were attached to each Battalion to act as liaison officers between the I N A and the Japanese Head quarters Their duties were to liaise with

Japanese Head Quarters and neighbouring units, to act as interpreters and to arrange for rations, transport, medicines, etc, from Japanese supplies

On the 3rd January 1944, Netaji delivered his farewell speech to the Regiment. It was one of the most inspired and moving speeches that he has ever delivered in East Asia.

Three thousand soldiers in full military feet stood rigidly to attention for an hour and half and listened to every word he spoke with rapt attention Netaji declared "You are the strength of my arms, the force with which I shall be able to protect rights, and everything depends on what you achieve on the battle-field". He warned them too much that as the first large formation of the I N. A to go into action, the Japanese would put them through various tests and hardships and he advised every one who had not felt equal to it to stay behind The soldiers assured him that they would never bring shame on India's fair name by turning their backs to the front or retreating before the enemy

On the 4th January 1944, advance parties of the No 1 Battalion moved by train to Prome, and No 2 and 3 Battalions to Mandalay

In addition to the troops of No 1 Guerilla Regiment there were already at the front a large number of men belonging to the Bahadur and Intelligence groups They were organized in small groups of 8-10 I. N A. men and were attached to various Japanese forces, to help in the collection of information, interrogation of captured prisoners of war and to do propaganda among the personal of the British Indian army, through loud speakers, leaflets and pamphlets. These groups were distributed as follows in the various sectors under senior I. N. A. officers —

(a) *Arakan Sector* under command of Shaheed Colonel Misra Sardar-e-Jang and Major Mehar Das Sardar-e-Jang.

(b) *Bishanpore sector* under Colonel S. A Malik Sardar-e-Jang

(c) *Kohima Sector:* under Shaheed Major Maghar Singh and Shaheed Major Ajmere Singh.

In the fighting that followed these parties distinguished themselves in fighting and in collecting battle intelligence. In February 1944, the encirclement and the almost complete annihilation of the British 7th Division in the Maungdaw—Buthidang area was due largely to the activities of the group commanded by Col L. S. Misra and Major Mehar Dass In this sector Lt Hari Singh won the Sher-e-Hind medal, equivalent of British Victoria Cross by slaying single handed 7 British Soldiers. In the Bishanpore Sector, the group commander Col S. A. Malik especially distinguished himself, and reached within two miles of Imphal Colonel Malik also took over the administration of the liberated areas of Manipore State. In the Kohima sector, parties under the Command of Major Maghar Singh, also did excellent work Among those who especially distinguished themselves were Shaheed Capt Gurbachan-Singh, Shaheed Lt. Sohan Lal, Capt. Mohd Hussain and Lt. Asif.

Activities of No 1 Battalion Subhas Brigade

Having received final orders, the advance party of the Battalion left Rangoon for Prome, on 4th February, 1944, by train. The main body of the unit left on the 5th and 6th under the command of Major P. S. Raturi. The unit arrived at Prome without any serious difficulty, although the railway line and the bridge were very much damaged by enemy aerial bombing From Prome to Taungup, a distance of approximately 100 miles the unit travelled on foot, and heavy baggage being carried in Japanese lorries, again from Taungap to Myo Haung, a distance of about 150 miles, the unit went on foot, leaving the heavy baggage to be transported by coastal boats.

At Taungup, our camp was heavily bombed by enemy aircraft, and we lost 16 men. Some of the boats carrying our equipment, were machine gunned and sunk by enemy fighter planes. The Battalion eventually concentrated at Kyauktaw where they formed the Battalion base in mid March 1944

A few days later information was received that a whole Division of West African negroes was advancing South along the East Bank of the Kaladan river, and as they advanced they were constructing a road behind them Another road was being constructed from the West Coast to link up with the other road running parallel to the east bank of the Kaladan river The function of these roads was to be at a place a few miles north of Kaladan village

This place was known Tetma, and here the West Africans were trying to establish a brigade across the Kaladan river to link up the two roads The task alloted to Major Raturi was to prevent the Africans on the West bank of the Kaladan from crossing over to the East bank and establishing a bridgehead

Major P S Raturi started off with three Companies consisting in all of approximately 300 men, but before he could reach Tetma the enemy had already crossed over in large numbers and had established itself in well fortified hills on the East bank of the Kaladan Major Raturi at once decided to attack this enemy By a clever encircling movement through thick bamboo forests he managed to encircle and annihilate the enemy in both these villages—Lower and upper Tetma Having captured these two villages he decided to advance further up the Kaladan valley His scouts reported that an enemy force, approximately one Battalion strong was entrenching itself on a prominent hill Major Raturi decided to attack by night, and, followed by two companies of his crack troops, crawled right up to the enemy position and at a given signal they all charged into the enemy trenches with fixed bayonets There was very fierce hand to hand fighting in which our men, shouting "Bharat Mata ki Jai" "Netaji ki Jai", neither asked for nor gave any quarter At last, bit by bit the enemy started giving ground The enemy collapse came suddenly When, realizing that they were faced with troops with vastly superior morale, they left their trenches and made a mad rush to get their boats in order to escape to the West Bank of the river, where their main forces, including heavy



Commander of No. 1 (Subhas Brigade) Regiment in Kaladan area



Brigade Adjutant on the Tiddim Front



Commander No 2 Battalion Subhas Brigade during Imphal operations.



Commander Bahadur Group in Burma from Feb 42—Jan 44 and later worked with Subhas Brigade and No 2 div as D-Q M G

artillery were concentrated But, our men had no intention of letting them escape so easily and they followed them down to their boats and as they, were rowing across the river they opened heavy machinegun fire and sank at least 16 of the escaping boats The enemy artillery on the west bank opened up a heavy barrage on our men, who had no weapons heavier than rifle and grenades to reply to their artillery fire As a result 14 men were killed and 22 wounded. When dawn broke out all the enemy that had crossed over to the East bank of the Kaladan had been forced back to the West bank It was estimated that in this battle we inflicted at least 250 casualties on the enemy besides capturing large quantities of arms, ammunition and delicious food which our men had not tasted for a long time

In the meantime more Japanese troops arrived to reinforce our Battalion, and together, we advanced on both sides of the Kaladan river. After bitter fighting, Paletwa 50 miles furthur North and later Daletme were occupied

After a short rest for reorganization, our troops were on the move again From Daletme, approximately 40 miles to the West, could be seen the Indian frontier, the Sacred soil on which our soldiers longed to plant the national flag Soldiers frequently approached their officers and said, "Sahib our orders from Netaji are that we have to hoist the tricolour on Indian soil as soon as possible. Let us, therefore, not wait for any rest here" By this time it was early May 1944 The nearest British port on the Indian side was Mowdok Major Raturi decided to launch an attack on it as soon as possible by this time, through constant retreat and harassment, the morale of the enemy forces was completely shattered, and the moral of our men was very high indeed Our men had established a definite superiority over the enemy

The attack on Mowdok was launched at night with lightening speed It came as a complete surprise to the enemy who fled, leaving behind large quantities of rations of Ata, Ghee, Sugar, etc, and considerable quantities of arms and ammunition including 3

mortars, which we needed very badly

The entry of the I N A on Indian territory was a most touching scene. Soldiers laid themselves flat on the ground and passionately kissed the sacred soil of their motherland which they had get out to liberate. A regular flag-hoisting ceremony was held amidst great rejoicing and singing of the Azad Hind Fauj National Anthem The Anthem was —

Subh Sukh chain ki barkha barse Bharat bhag hai jaga
Punjab, Sind, Gujrat, Maratha, Dravid, Utkal, Banga,
Chanchal Sagar Vindh Himala, Nila Jamuna Ganga,
Tere nit gun gayen, Tujh se jiwan payen,
Sab tan paye asha
Suraj ban kar jag par chamke Bharat nam subhaga
Jai ho, Jai ho, Jai ho, Jaya, Jaya, Jaya, Jaya ho,
Bharat nam subhaga
Subah sawere pankh pakheru, Teri hi gun gayen,
Ras bhari bharpur hawaen, Jiwan men rut layen,
Sab mil kar Hind pukare, Jai Azad Hind ke nare,
Piara desh hamara
Suraj ban kar jag par chamke Bharat nam subhaga.
Jai ho, Jai ho, Jai ho, Jaya, Jaya, Jaya, Jaya ho,
Bharat nam subhaga
Sab ke dil men prit basae, Teri mithi bani,
Har sube ke rahne wale, Har mazhab ke prani,
Sab bhed aur fark mita ke Sab god men teri a-ke,
Gundhen prem ki mala
Suraj ban kar jag par chamke Bharat nam subhaga
Jai ho, Jai ho, Jai ho, Jaya, Jaya, Jaya, Jaya ho,
Bharat nam subhaga

After the occupation of Mowdok, various outposts around it were established About this time the situation regarding the supply of rations was becoming very difficult All our rations were transported by rider boats from the supply base at Paletwa, where enemy aircraft were very active both by day and night

In view of this as well as the impending counter-attack by the British forces from the direction of Maungdaw—Buthidaung, the Japanese commander in Mowdak area decided to withdraw his forces, and advised Major Raturi to do the same Major Raturi called a conference of his officers and explained the situation to them, and the decision of the Japanese forces on their right and left flanks to withdraw. The officers with one voice told Major Raturi that "If the Japanese want to withdraw let them do so We have orders to get to Delhi—Delhi lies ahead of us. Having once hoisted our national flag on Indian soil how can we strike it and retreat before the enemy when we have defeated him wherever he has met us No Sir, the Japanese can retreat because Tokyo lies that way, our goal —the Red Fort of Delhi—lies ahead of us. There is no going back for us".

Having taken stock of the quantity rations and the military situation, Major Raturi decided to leave one company under the command of Capt Suraj Mal at Mowdok to guard the flag and decided to withdraw the remainder of his forces nearer the supply base. The role of this company was more or less a "suicidal role." Facing them were the British, strengthening their forces and preparing to attack sooner or later our men They had occupied a portion of Indian territory, and they were determined to hold on to it The Japanese, admiring the spirit of our men, decided to leave one platoon of their own troops in the same area to share the fate of the I.N.A These Japanese troops were put under direct command of Capt Suraj Mall. It was probably the first time in the history of the Japanese army that their troops had been placed under command of a foreign officer.

Major Raturi, Capt. Suraj Mal, and the other officers and men of the I N A, through their gallantry and self sacrifice, convinced the Japanese that when it came to fighting for the honour and liberation of their country, Indians were as brave, if not braver, than any other soldier in the world The Japanese, who once doubted if the I.N.A could ever face another fight and bear any handship,

were so impressed that they voluntarily placed their own troops under the command of an Indian officer. The Japanese C-in-C in Burma went to Netaji and bowing before him said, "Your Excellency, we were wrong We misjudged the soldiers of the I.N A We know now that they are no mercenaries, but real Patriots".

Capt Suraj Mal and his small band of gallant-men stayed at Mowdok from May to September 1944 During this period they were attacked by the British forces almost everyday, but not even on one occasion did they retreat one step before them One instance of the type of fighting our men had to go through is given below.—

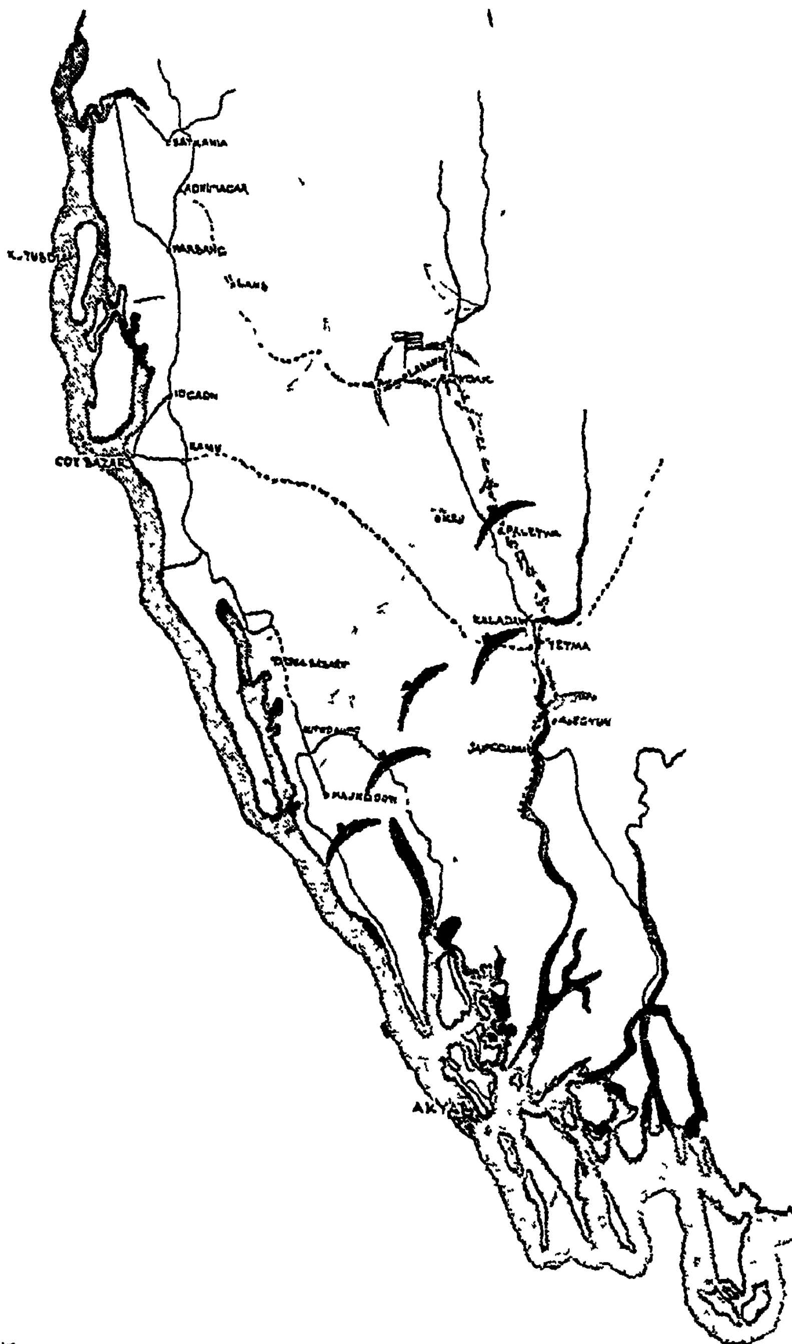
The Azad Hind Fauj had a small outpost of 20 men at Labawa, which was commanded by 2nd Lt Amar Singh One morning at about 0800 hrs the enemy, approximately 150 strong, attacked this post They had heavy artillery and mortars to give them covering fire and to put down a smoke screen

Our men, who were armed only with machine guns and rifles and had a very limited quantity of ammunition, held their fire and allowed the enemy to come nearer All of a sudden they opened rapid fire on the enemy inflicting heavy casualties and forcing them to retreat. At about midday the enemy attacked again The attack was preceded by intense artillery and mortar shelling, and the attack was launched after a smoke screen had been laid all round the post

This attack was also met by our men in a very cool, calm and determined manner, and once again the enemy had to withdraw leaving a number of dead around our post That day the enemy appeared determined to capture our post, but our men were equally determined not to allow them to do so Our men—each one of them—were fully prepared to lay down their lives rather than let the enemy oust them from their post At about 1700 hrs the enemy made a third attack on the post This was more determined than the two previous ones, and this time the enemy attack was preceded by aerial bombardment Six enemy fighter planes circled over our post for over an hour dropping heavy calibre bombs, and later machine-gunned our trenches They used 20 m m bullets which are generally used against heavy

KALADAN VALLEY OPERATION

SITUATION APRIL – JUNE 1944



LEGEND-

N.R.

BR

JAP

armoured vehicles like tanks and armoured cars This was followed by intensive artillery and mortor shelling, and the enemy thinking that their aeroplanes and artillery had probably annihilated our post, advanced rather boldly But God was on our side. We had suffered only one casualty during all this Our men withheld their fire and almost from point blank range opened deadly accurate fire on the enemy. The enemy who had expected practically no opposition, was taken aback and once again they beat a hasty retreat to lick their wounds By this time Capt Suraj Mal, who was in command of the main camp a few miles away, rallied about 50 men and came to the assistance of the Labawa post. On arrival there he found our men in great spirits and not a bit shaken by the repeated attack of the enemy Suraj Mal decided to return the enemy's call, and to go and attack his base a few miles away. It was nearly dusk when he, together with his 50 men, crawled up to the enemy base and charged into their camp The enemy were not expecting this at all, and he ran helter skelter in all directions, causing considerable confusion in camp After successfully raiding the enemy camp and capturing considerable quantities of arms and ammunition Capt. Suraj Mal returned to his camp The enemy was so shaken by this bold move of Capt Suraj Mal that we had no trouble from them for some considerable time

While this was going on Major Raturi had to undertake to supply rations to Capt Suraj Mal's party He had to train his own men to row boats and deliver rations to the Kaladan. In addition to this the Battalion was also alloted an anti-parachute and anti-guerilla job For this he had to disperse his force—one company at Sami, one company at Apukawa and one company at Kyauktak.

In September 1944, after the failure of Imphal Campaign, Netaji issued orders to all his forces to fall back The No. 1 Battalion was ordered to return to Rangoon The men at first refused to obey these orders They thought those could not have come from Netaji, but after they were convinced, they agreed to return to Rangoon—victorious in every battle but heart broken to have had to

retreat. The Battalion concentrated at Rangoon in the middle of November.

In action the Battalion lost its adjutant-Capt. Kabul Singh, a very gallant soldier and 30 other Shaheeds During the operations the Battalion suffered terribly from Malaria, and dysentry and at the time of their arrival in Rangoon almost every single person was suffering from malaria.

The advance parties of the Regimental Headquarters and the two Battalions moved from Rangoon by train to Mandalay on 4th and 5th February, 1944. On the way owing to the railway bridges being blown up by enemy aircraft the men had to cover considerable distances on foot.

I, together with Major Mahboob Ahmad and Major Ram Sarup started off from Rangoon by car on the 5th February and arrived at Mandalay on the 8th February

On the 10th February I went to Maymyo to meet General Muta Guchi who was commanding all the Japanese forces in North Burma. He explained the role of my Regiment in the operations that were going to be started shortly His plan very briefly was that the No 1 Regiment should proceed to the Haka—Falam front and take over the defence of that sector. There were two British Brigades operating on that front—The Lushai Brigade and the Aijal Brigade.

The task of the No 1 Regt was (a) to prevent these brigades from advancing on Kalewa and thereby threatening the main supply line of the Japanese forces operating against Tiddim—Tamu, and (b) to carry out offensive operations on the Haka—Falam front in the direction of Lungleh with the object of deceiving the British of the real point of attack I was told that as soon as the main offensive was started by the Japanese my Regiment would be given an opportunity of leading the advance into India.

Having received instructions I returned to Mandalay on the 12th February. By that time most of the personnel of the No 2 & 3 Battalions had arrived at Mandalay From Mandalay we had to despatch two companies to Pakokou to bring rations on bullock carts

via Pawk—Tilin—Gan Gaw—Kan to Nauchaung which was to be the Regimental base

On the 14th February I with, senior staff officers of the Brigade left Mandalay by car for Mutaik which was the Headquarters of the Japanese Division which was operating in the Chin Hill area. This Division was known as the "Yumi" or "White Tiger Division."

I N.A. Troops from Mandalay left for Kalewa in parties of approximately 300 men and performed the journey from Mandalay to Yeu by train or on foot and from Yeu to Kalewa in lorries or on foot

On 16th February I arrived at Mutaik and went to meet the Japanese Commander on the Yumi Division on cooperation with whom the No. 1 Regt (Subhas Brigade) had to operate in the Chin Hill area. He explained the local situation to me and told me that in the Chin Hill area, the enemy strength was one Division (17th Indian Div) at Tiddim, one Indian Brigade at Aijal, one Indian Brigade at Lungleh, and one Brigade consisting of Chins and Gurkhas known as the Lushai brigade which was split up into guerilla bands and was harassing the Japanese garrison around Haka Falam Their main Head Quarters were located at Tibual approximately 30 miles north at Falam Salen approximately 40 miles west of Haka, and Shurkhwa, approximately 50 miles South of Haka. In addition to these they had a regular network of smaller posts all round Haka and Falam These Chin guerillas under the command of British officers were making the stay of Japanese garrisions very difficult at Haka and Falam The total strength of these guerillas in this area was approximately 3000 strong.

The Japanese had one battalion and one company, approximately 600 men, at Falam, and one company at Haka, approximately 200 strong Other Japanese troops were located in the area of Fort White and Kangyi.

The No 1. Guerilla Regiment of the I. N A. was to take over the Haka-Falam sector from the Japanese, and prevent the

enemy from capturing Haka and Falam and cutting off the main Japanese supply lines Kalewa—Fort white and Kalewa—Tamu

The Japanese General was of the opinion that the British were preparing to launch huge offensive with the intention of recapturing Burma. For this the enemy had massed large reserves of men and material at Imphal and Tiddim and had built an excellent road from Imphal to Tamu called the Road to Tokyo.

The British plan, according to him, was to advance from (a) Imphal-Vimpalel-Tamu to Kalewa. (b) from Tiddim via Fort White to Kalewa, and (c) the Lushai Brigade and other troops in Lungleh area would orderly advance via Haka—Kan—Gangaw—Tilin Pauk to Pakokou on the Irrawaddy. The main task of the No. 1. Guerilla Brigade was to prevent this He went on to say that the Japanese plan was to attack the British just before they launched their main offensive and upset all their plans by capturing Imphal.

I told the Japanese General that I did not appreciate the idea of their alloting an out of the way sector to the I. N A. and that I wanted to, and I had been promised, that we would form the spear head of the advance into India. He told me that he had received instructions from his General Head Quarters that the I N. A. was to be tested first and that for that reason a separate and independent sector was being alloted to us He also warned me that that sector was probably the hardest sector to hold, not so much from the point of view of enemy strength, but because of the tremendous difficulties of terrain and ration supply

I had also been warned about this test by Netaji and our soldiers were anxious to prove their worth whatever the obstacles in our way might be I, however, made the Japanese General promise that as soon as the main offensive was launched my troops would be given an opportunity and the honour of leading the advance into India

I returned to my Head Quarters and issued orders to Major Ran Singh, Commanding the No 2 Battalion to despatch a detachment to take over Falam from the Japanese.

The Regimental base was to be establised at Nauchawng (Myitha Haka) I arrived at Myitha Haka on the 24th February with Senior Staff Officers of the Regimental Headquarters By that time approximately 500 men of the No. 2 Battalion under Major Ran Singh, had arrived there The rest of the Brigade was still coming up in small parties from Yeu and Kalewa

On the 25th February Major Ran Singh sent the Awal company under Lieut Sikander Khan with approximately 100 men to take over the defence of Falam from the Japanese

On arrival at Myitha Haka I found out that there were no rations at Falam and that we would have to make our own arrangement to supply rations to our troops at Haka and Falam. The supply point was at Myitha Haka where Japanese lorries used to come and deliver rations at the Regimental Headquarters From here to Falam, a distance of approximately 50 miles, and to Haka, approximately 85 miles away, we had to arrange our own means of transportation. There was only a hill track connecting Haka Falam with the Regimental base. We had no transport of any type to help us to carry our rations. The Japanese garrison was supplied with rations by their animal transport companies, and they also used coolies for the purposes, but we were told that no transport was available for carrying I. N A rations The result was that our men had to carry their rations on their heads to supply their comrades who were fighting in the front line.

Haka-Falam is a very mountainous area Falam is situated at a height of 6000 feet and Haka at 7000 feet Our valiant soldiers had to labour hard daily to clamber up those lofty heights, carrying heavy weights on their heads to prevent their comrades in the front line from being starved to death Rations were of very poor quality indeed All that we could get with the greatest difficulty to supply to our troops in the front line was salt and rice and even these they failed to receive on several occassions Sugar, milk, tea and meat were luxuries which our men hardly ever saw

In order to build up a chain of supply centres we had to establish 6 posts each approximately eight miles apart. Rations were carried from post to post Every men had to do approximately 16 miles a day and it was a most painful business to see our men being treated in this way We all realized that these meagre rations meant slow but sure death. The Japanese could have, if they wanted to, help us in this respect, but they did not do so and I am of the opinion that they did it deliberately They had seen the spirit and determination of our men and had realized that they would stand no nonsense from the Japanese In actual fact as Field Marshal Terauchi had told Netaji long before in Singapur, the Japanese did not want large formations of the I.N A to come to the front and now that they were there the Japanese wished to break their spirit and health by putting impossible obstacles in their way All that they wanted to do was to break the morale of the I N.A. and tell Netaji that his army could not face the rigours of a hard campaign. But our soldiers had been forewarned by Netaji and they had promised him that they would face all hardships For them there was only one course, to do or die They carried on their work without complaint or even a murmur. The Japanese were putting us through a terrible test indeed

When the men of the Awal company arrived at Falam they carried on their backs all the heavy machine guns, light automatics reserve ammunition, all their clothing and bedding and 20 day rations. In actual fact every man including officers, carried on their backs an average weight of 85-90 lbs

Immediately after their arrival they took over the defence of the Falam area from the Japanese At that time there were approximately 600 British and Chin guerillas in the immediate vicinity of Falam. We had heard a lot about these Chin guerillas, and in fairness to them, I will say that they had created a very favourable impression on the Japanese by their skill in junglé warfare. On several occasions they had successfully ambushed Japanese supply columns and bodily carried away some Japanese soldiers. The name of one

Major Manning was particularly well known, and, I might say, feared by the Japanese This British officer was an expert in guerilla warfare and had been in the Chin Hill several years before the outbreak of the war and knew the people of the Chin Hill and their language very well. He had married a Chin wife. The inhabitants of the Chin Hill, therefore, cooperated whole heartedly with him and gave him all the information regarding the disposition and movements of our troops

The task of the Awal company was not an easy one I would have liked to have kept many more troops at Falam but this was not possible on account of ration difficulty, and 100 men were the maximum we could maintain at Falam

It was bitterly cold there and our men had only one warm shirt and one thin cotton blanket They spent whole nights sitting around the fire as it was impossible to sleep on account of intense cold Many of our sentries guarding strategic heights were unable to stand the bitter cold and freezing blizzard and collapsed at their post—never to recover again. There was also an acute shortage of medicines and medical staff. This company had only one Naik and two nursing sepoys as the only medical staff. Through daily wear and tear the men's boots were in a very poor state, and some men had no boots at all Their clothes after a few months of rough life, were in tatters and there was no hope of any replacements But, inspite of all this, the men kept up their spirits wonderfully well although their health was fast deteriorating, particularly the health of the people in the plains around Myitha Haka where due to malaria 60% of the men were in hospital. Myitha Haka is situated in the heart of the Kaba valley which was known to the British as the "Death Valley" In this valley our men had no mosquito nets Any how, the men realised it all They had undertaken to perform a task and they meant to complete it

On the 11th March I went to the Divisional Head Quarters at Hyigon, where I met Major Fujiwara, the Japanese officer who had handed us over to Col. Mohan Singh at the Farrer Park. He

was at that time acting as the Intelligence officer of the North Burma Command He told me that the Japanese in cooperation with certain units of the I N A had attacked and surrounded Tiddim I told him that I had been promised by the Japanese C-in-C that we would be given the opportunity of leading the attack I insisted that some troops of my Brigade should get an opportunity, of taking part in the attack He agreed, and asked me to call up the No 3 Bttn, which was concentrated at Kalewa 20 miles away I telephoned Col Thakur Singh, Regimental Second-in-Command to bring the troops to Kyigon as soon as possible They marched all night and by daybreak they had covered 20 miles They were ordered to proceed to Fort White and then attack Tiddim, but before they could get there, Tiddim had already fallen

On the 17th March, information was received by me that a strong column of enemy troops was operating in the area of Klankhua, approximately 40 miles west of Falam. I at once ordered Lt Sikander Khan to take his company and contact the enemy. He was instructed that if the enemy troops were Indians they were not to open fire on them first He was to ask them to come over and join us in the fight for India's freedom and only if they fired first the fire was to be returned Accordingly Lieut Sikander Khan, with approximately 80 men of the Awal company, set out on their mission on the night of the 19/20th March Over high and precipitous mountains they walked all night and at dawn were in the vicinity of a village named Zomual. Here they halted for a short rest while sentries were posted all round A short while later one of the sentries reported that a strong fighting patrol of the enemy was approaching Lieut Sikander Khan at once decided to capture or annihilate this enemy force Brisk orders were issued and in a flash all the men were in position ready to ambush the enemy The enemy, who never expected our men to be there, walked straight into our ambush. Lt Sikander Khan pounced forward and pointing his revolver at the patrol commander's chest asked him to surrender, which he did together with all his force. We captured

one officer and 24 men of the Lushai Brigade, complete with all their arms and equipment

On interrogation Lt Sikander Khan found out that our prisoners were the men of the Lushai Brigade and that Major Manning, the expert Guerilla fighter, was also in the same vicinity and that two powerful columns—one of Lushai Brigade and the other of Punjabi troops were advancing on either side of the track to Falam. Lt. Sikander Khan decided to capture Major Manning alive and to forestall this move of the enemy on Falam

Major Manning was at that time down below in Nullah Lt Sikander Khan laid an ambush for him and then asked one of the captured prisoners to ask him to come up to where they were Manning came to us unsuspectingly as the first ambush was carried out so quietly that the people in the nullah knew nothing about it He was preceded by his orderly as he came up the hill The orderly was quickly captured as he was turning round a corner, but when Manning came near, Lt. Sikandar Khan could not restrain himself. He at once pounced upon him and pointing his revolver at him ordered him to surrender. Manning, who was carrying a stev gun at once opened fire at him Lt Sikandar returned fire with his revolver which unfortunately misfired A Bren Gun which was fixed there also misfired and jammed Manning then threw down his stev gun and ran down the hill with Lt Sikander close at his heels, but he however managed to escape

Lt Sikandar Khan then attacked the enemy force and drove it back several miles The enemy was so shaken, that he beat a hurried retreat and gave up all ideas of advancing on Falam for a long time Lt Sikandar Khan returned to Falam on the 2nd March with all the prisoners, arms, and ammunition. His own force did not suffer a single casualty Intensive patrolling then continued

In the meantime a small reserve of ration was built up at Falam, and it was now possible to send a garrison to take over the defence of Haka.

On the 28th March 1944 the Parwana company of the No 2

Battalion under the command of Lieut Amrik Singh arrived at Falam from Myitha Haka They carried with them on their backs, all heavy machine guns, reserve ammunition, and one month's rations A few buffaloes caught in paddy fields were also used as beasts of burden, and helped us to carry some of our rations.

The road between Falam and Haka, a distance of approximately 35 miles, was under constant watch by enemy guerillas They had established a strong hold in a village called Chunsong, approximately 10 miles away from the road, from there they operated against Japanese supply columns. They were a constant source of trouble and anxiety to the Japanese but the Japanese, probably considering their strength at Haka to be insufficient, never attacked this post

The Parwana company left Falam on the 30th March. They were approximately 150 strong I accompanied them from Falam. Next day, the 31st March, I received information that the enemy at Chunsong was preparing to attack us I decided to attack them first The attack was led by Lieut. Lehna Singh, who surrounded the village at night and after a fierce struggle drove the enemy out of his stronghold capturing a considerable quantity of good rations

On the 3rd April, 1944, we took over the defence of Haka from the Japanese garrison which returned to Falam and later to Tiddim

Conditions at Haka were even harder than those at Falam. Ration supply was becoming a very acute problem The strength and the activities of the enemy demanded that there should be a strong force at Haka, but the ration difficulty made it necessary to maintain the minimum number of men to be fed at Haka which was approximately 85 miles from the supply point The choice before us therefore was, (a) to have a large force at Haka and risk its being starved to death and (b) to have a small force and risk its being annihilated by the enemy A conference of officers was held and it was decided to adopt the second course It was bitterly cold at Haka which was situated at a height of 7,000 feet Some of the piquets held by our men were living at a height of nearly 8,000 feet

On the 5th. April, 1944, I went to inspect camp piquets and asked the piquet commanders about the food position They all said that they were getting enough, satisfactory rations Due to the difficulty of surprised to hear that reply. On return to the camp I found that these men had not had proper food for the last two days and they had been living on a type of mountain grass known as Lingra It was quite an ordinary incident that happened hundreds of times.

Opposite our lines only a few miles away we could see British Dakotas dropping rations to their troops by parachutes Our men knew where to look for really good rations. They never complained about not receiving enough rations. All that they were always complaining about was that they were not allowed enough opportunities to attack the British posts to capture rations

On the Haka front the enemy was very active and more numerous than at Falam Their main centres were at Surkhua, Zokhua, Klang, and Sopum There were approximately 7,200 enemy guerillas around Haka as compared to our 150 men of the Parwana company.

Capt. Amrik Singh, the Commander of the company, was told that the best way to defend Haka was to snatch the initiative from the enemy and to keep on attacking the British continuously and thereby forcing them to go on the defensive

This plan worked well Thanks to the excellent leadership of Major Mahboob Ahmed, Major Ran Singh and Capt. Amrik Singh all of whom carried out a most intensive patrol activity even behind the enemy lines forcing them to the defensive It was by no means an easy task In the early stages the enemy resisted hard

On the 14th April our post at Klang Klang was heavily fired upon by the enemy. As soon as the noise of firing was heard in the main Haka camp, Capt Amrik Singh at once took out a strong patrol and went in search of the enemy, who retreated so far that our men could not even establish contact with them.

On the 16th April the enemy, in much superior numbers, attacked our post on Klang Klang Road They were approximately

100 strong, whereas our post consisted of only 20 men The enemy used 3 mortars and machine guns. They completely encircled our post and some of them came upto within 50 yards of our defences This post was commanded by Lt. Lehna Singh, who, realising that situation was becoming very grave, decided to charge the enemy Leaving 10 men to defend the post, he collected a party of 10 men and charged straight at the machine gun post which the enemy had established near the piquet. He captured this position and opened deadly flanking fire on the remainder. The enemy realizing the danger decided to beat a hurried retreat Lt. Lehna Singh, with this little force, followed the British troop for over 10 miles shouting and challenging them to stop and fight, but the enemy was in no need for it and gave our men no chance to catch up

On the 30th. March Major Mahboob Ahmed, the Brigade Adjutant, went to inspect our troops operating on the Tiddim front. He found that, after the fall of Tiddim, the Japanese had put them on to widen the road The officer in charge, who happened to be a junior officer had agreed to do this, but Major Mahboob at once stopped this and ordered his troops to return to the Regimental Base He sent a full report of the incident to me and I was very distressed about it as I was not at all satisfied that the Japanese were sincere to us. An enrty my diary on that date reads, "Boobies' report is distressing . .. I wonder what is going to be the outcome of this one sided co-presperity."

About this time in mid-April both sides were very active. The enemy were massing troops to capture Haka Falam I was also able to increase my strength. It was a struggle in which both sides were trying to snatch the initiative.

On the 23rd April I took out a patrol with the object of reconnoitering area for an attack on the enemy posts in the area We advanced very cautiously and crept up very near to the enemy positions All of a sudden our sentries reported a strong patrol of the enemy advancing towards us I decided to annihilate this party and ordered Lt Lehna Singh to lay an ambush for them

Lt. Lehna Singh took his men and posted them on either side of the track The enemy patrol walked up unsuspectingly and ran right into the ambush .The entire patrol was either killed or captured alive. Owing to our most intensive patrol activities we forced the enemy to withdraw to his posts and beat a general retreat along the whole front.

On the 28th April in response to my letter requesting Netaji to allow us to attack Imphal I received information that the No. 1 Division of the I. N. A consisting of the Azad and Gandhi Brigades were attacking Imphal, and that the No 1 (Subhas Brigade) should be ready to push through and get accross the Brahmaputra as soon as possible I was told that the fall of Imphal was a matter of hours and our soldiers were waiting most anxiously for the order to cross over from Kohima to the other side of the Brahmaputra into the heart of India

On the 10th May 1944, I issued orders to various commanders for the attack on a British stronghold at Klang Klang This stronghold of the British was located approximately 20 miles west of Haka, on the top of a mountain ridge. It had a very commanding position and the only track leading up to it was a very narrow one and completely commanded by the post All other approaches were extremely difficult, being almost like sheer cliffs Here on this apparentely impregnable stronghold the main British garrison was stationed and from there they were carrying out guerilla activities We also learnt that there were plenty of rations there. The Japanese, who had been at Haka before us, had not found it a practical proposition to attack this post Some of the Japanese liaison officers with me at Haka came to request me not to attempt to attack that post as it was almost impossible to capture it without the support of artillery and aeroplanes of which unfortunately we had none.

On the 12th April I took out the commanders who were to take part in the raid on Klang Klang post for a reconnaisance of the area That day we covered over 28 miles and returned to Haka at night. In the evening I was informed that I was required to report

immediately at the Japanese divisional headquarters at Indaingyi for fresh orders as to the change in the role of the Regiment

From Haka I issued orders to the 3rd Bn over the telephone at Nauchaung, 90 miles away, to move immediately to Ukhul.

I left Haka on the 14th May with Major Ram Sarup and some of the Brigade headquarters for Nauchaung It was a distance of 85 miles which we covered on foot in just over two days

In the meantime I had issued instructions that the raid on the Klang-Klang post was to be carried out under the direction of Major Mahboob Ahmad The main party left Haka on the evening of the 14th May At about dusk they attacked the first British outpost which was a covering post to Klang This post was captured without much opposition The advance then continued at night and at about 0400 hours in the morning of the 15th May they reached the vicinity of the British stronghold Major Mahboob Ahmad tried toencircle the post but this was found impossible due to sheer cliffs The track leading up to the post was very well covered by the guns in the post The situation looked very difficult Major Mahboob then decided to launch a frontal attack. Taking a small group of 8-10 men with him, and Capt Amrik Singh, Shaheed-e-Bharat, he began to creep up, inch by inch a very steep mountain side Fortunately for the party the moon had also come up and they were able to see better than during the earlier part of the night It was a very hazardous task, and even a little slip would have sent them tumbling to death hundreds of feet into the nullah

Luckily for them the enemy was not expecting them on this side of the fortrees as they had considered it impossible for any one to attack from that direction. After a long and nerve wrecking climb they came right up to the enemy trenches, closely followed by their men. The worst part of the climb was now over But, as soon as they had come up, the enemy spotted them and opened a most intensive barrage of fire. Our men took cover and returned the enemy fire Our machineguns, which had been very cleverly cited gave covering fire to our men. The fire of our machine guns was so ac-

curate that the enemy guns were soon silenced and the attacking party of Capt Amrik Singh was able to advance further But this was not for long The enemy in other trenches nearby opened heavy rifle and machine-gun fire Capt Amrik Singh carrying hand grenades in both hands rallied his men and with one cry of Jai Hind, a cry that rent the skies and shattered the nerves of the enemy, charged straight into the enemy defences He threw both hand grenades on the enemy post and silenced it for ever They had now pierced the enemy's perimeter and fighting was going on inside the camp After a very hard struggle the enemy left the post and fled down hill followed by valleys of accurate fire from our soldiers As day light broke out the, peak which had been the scene of bloody fighting at night was enveloped in a shroud of thick fog, but, gradually as the sun came up the mist cleared, and through the clouds, the people at Haka saw the Tricolour fluttering proudly over the strong-hold which only the night before had been in the hands of our enemies

A signal was then flashed back to Haka by Major Mahboob stating, "Have captured the enemy's fortification after great opposition The enemy having suffered severe casualties evacuated the post, leaving behind large quantities of most delicious tinned fruits, butter and jam They also left behind large quantities of arms and ammunition". This message was then flashed to the Regimental Base at Falam, from where instructions were sent back to Major Mahboob to destroy the enemy camp and return to Haka as soon as possible as the role of the Brigade had been changed

The new orders for the Brigade were —

"That the main body of the Brigade would proceed to Kohima and would be preferred, on the fall of Imphal, to advance rapidly and cross the Brahmaputra into the heart of Bengal"

The responsibility of holding and defending the Haka-Falam front and preventing the British guerilla forces from cutting off the main supply route of the armies fighting around Kohima and Imphal was still to be that of the No 1 (Subhas Brigade) Regiment. Accordingly I left approximately 150 men at Haka and 300 men at Falam

to perform this duty I fully realized by this time that it was too late then The monsoon had almost broken out and the British forces, surrounded by the Japanese in Imphal, had been considerably strength-ened by the arrival of a fresh Indian Division that had been transpor-ted by planes. By this time most of the Japanese air force had been transferred for fighting in the Pacific theatre In addition, a powerful force of the British was counter-attacking from the direction of Dima-pore and Kohima. The Japanese garrisons in that area were being very hard pressed and it was to assist them that the Japanese asked the No. 1. Regiment to proceed to Kohima Our soldiers were over-joyed to hear of the new role assigned to them because they had been living in the hope of such a day

At this time the troops which had been in the plains of Kalemyo were suffering almost without exception from Malaria, and about 70% of them were in hospital, but when the time for ambushing came, all the sick men from the hospital came and occupied the lorries They were determined not to be left behind. Most of the journey from Mytha Haka to Tamu was done in motor lorries belonging to the Japanese army.

From Tamu our men walked to Humine Oukhrul and then to Kharasom and Kohima. On arrival our men hoisted the Tricolour on the lofty mountain tops around Kohima The British whose strength had increased very considerably were counter attacking more and more vigorously every day. Our men were holding out most gallantly and beating back attack after attack

By this time heavy monsoons had set in Our only supply line-an unmetalled hill rose-was completely washed away and all supplies ceased to reach us. Our rations were exhausted and the men were living on paddy which they managed to collect in very small quantities from abandoned Naga villages They mixed this paddy with jungle grass and ate it after boiling They had not even little salt to add to this peculiar diet They, however, lived on this for several weeks and a time came when they were becoming extremely weak, but no one ever thought of retreating before the British.

All the medicines were finished The doctor had nothing with which he could treat his patients, and to make matters worse, in those jungles there were millions of huge flies which attacked men and beasts alike as soon as they had the slightest wound and within half an hour there were hundreds of maggots in their wounds, and in most cases there was no other alternative for the men than say Jai Hind and shoot themselves

It was in these circumstances that on the 4th June, I met the Commander of the Japanese Forces operating in that area. He informed me that the role of his Division, to which my Brigade was also attached, had been changed and that they were going back to Ukhrul He asked me to do the same These orders came as complete bombshell to me I told him that it was impossible for me to obey those orders We had hoisted our tricolour on Indian soil. How could we uproot it and retreat before the British whom our men had defeated in every battle? Also our men were unwilling to budge even an inch Realizing this Japanese commander decided to mislead me and to make me retreat on a false pretext

He told me that the I N A and the Japanese forces around Imphal had failed to capture it, and that he had been ordered, in cooperation with the No 1 Regiment, to attack and capture Imphal He asked me to select my role As I wrote in my diary, my choice was, of course, to attack on Imphal What I was given to understand was that as soon as we captured Imphal we would advance again On this assurance I was able to induce my men to withdraw to Ukhrul from where we were to attack Imphal along that road from Ukhrul to Imphal I returned with my unit to Ukhrul from where I sent out reconnaissance parties to find out possible routes for attacking Imphal The Japanese General arrived a couple of days later. I went and met him at the Divisional Headquarters He informed me that the situation had changed for the worse and that owing to the heavy monsoon it was impossible for the supply services to supply rations to troops in that areas He was, therefore, falling back on Tamu and Sittaung, where it was possible to get

rations by the only means of transport left to the Japanese, the Chindwin river. I informed him that I thought he had betrayed me by issuing false orders and requested him to transfer my brigade immediately to join the No 1. Division of the I N A. which had been fighting around Palet since early April He promised to do so

On the 22nd June he issued orders to me to withdraw to Tamu and rejoin the No 1. Division of the I N A. and so we started on the trek back again. This retreat from Kohima was perhaps one of the most difficult retreats that any army in the world had had to face. Torrential rain had washed away all tracks The men made fresh tracks which soon became almost a knee-deep mass of mud, in which many of the men got stuck and died there At that time there was no transport of any type with us. Almost every man was suffering from dysentry and malaria. No one had any strength left in him to help anyone else. It was a question of every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost. In that retreat I saw men eating horses which had been dead 4 days ago There were hundreds of dead human bodies of Japanese and Indian soldiers lying on either sides of the road These were the men who had died either through exhaustion, starvation and disease and some, who being unable to face this ordeal any longer, had taken their own lives by committing suicide, which they preferred to falling prisoners in the hands of the British

It was at this stage that the wily British thought that they would be able to subvert the I N A soldiers whose morale they estimated would be completely crushed due to unimaginable hardship and suffering They dropped leaflets from aeroplane signed by their commander The substance of these pamphlets was, "Soldiers of the I. N A. have no ammunition, no medicines or ration, you are living on jungle grass like wild animals. Come over to us, we will give you excellent food, clothing and medical attention as well as substantial pay and reward Why have you become so stone-hearted? Your children are waiting for you Come to us and we will send you on 3 months leave This is our real promise to you Do not be frightened to come to us.

We will welcome you". This was indeed a very tempting offer at a time when their condition was so terrible But, our soldiers, without a single exception, had only one reply to this. They said, "We would much rather live on jungle grass like wild animals and remain free man rather than have luxurious food and be among our children as British slaves and dishonorable men" They preferred death to dishonour

Through knee deep mud and slush under constant shell and machinegun fire, the valiant soldiers of the Azad Hind Fauj trudged back

There was nothing that the officers could do for their men at such a time, except to set a personal example, and, by words of encouragement, inspire their soldiers to hold on After travelling several hundred miles from Kohima, the soldiers of the Subhas Brigade arrived at Tamu Many of them died on the way. But, those of them that were still alive had only one hope that of being sent up to the Palel front to assist their comrades of the Gandhi and Azad Brigades But fortune had another disappointment in store for them On arrival at Tamu they were informed that they would not be sent up to join the No. 1 Division as they would form the general reserve in the hands of the Japanese Commander-in-Chief. We were disillusioned and deceived by the Japs once again.

A few days later, I was informed that all the Japanese forces and the Indian National Army would withdraw to the East bank of Chindwin This order broke men's hearts, and they finally realized that our assualt had failed

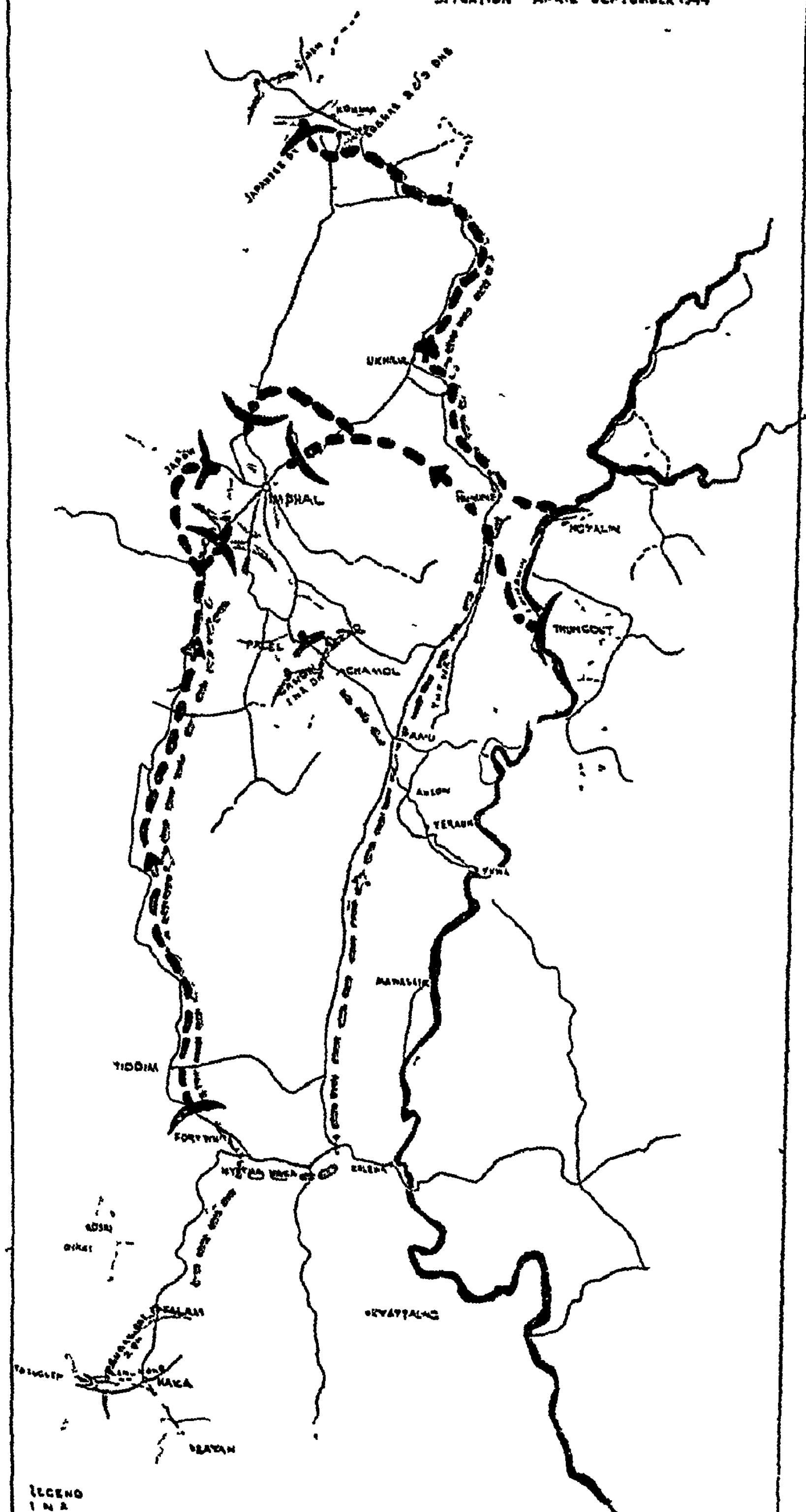
A strong deputation of officers and men came to me and suggested that the only honourable course left open to them was that all those who were still fit enough to walk a few miles should attack the enemy and perish fighting The sick, they all realized, would die anyhow I agreed to their plan, but the Japanese Liaison officer came to know of it, and sent a frantic message to Netaji who issued strict and final orders to me to come back. As a soldier there was no other alternative for me, but to obey these orders and return to

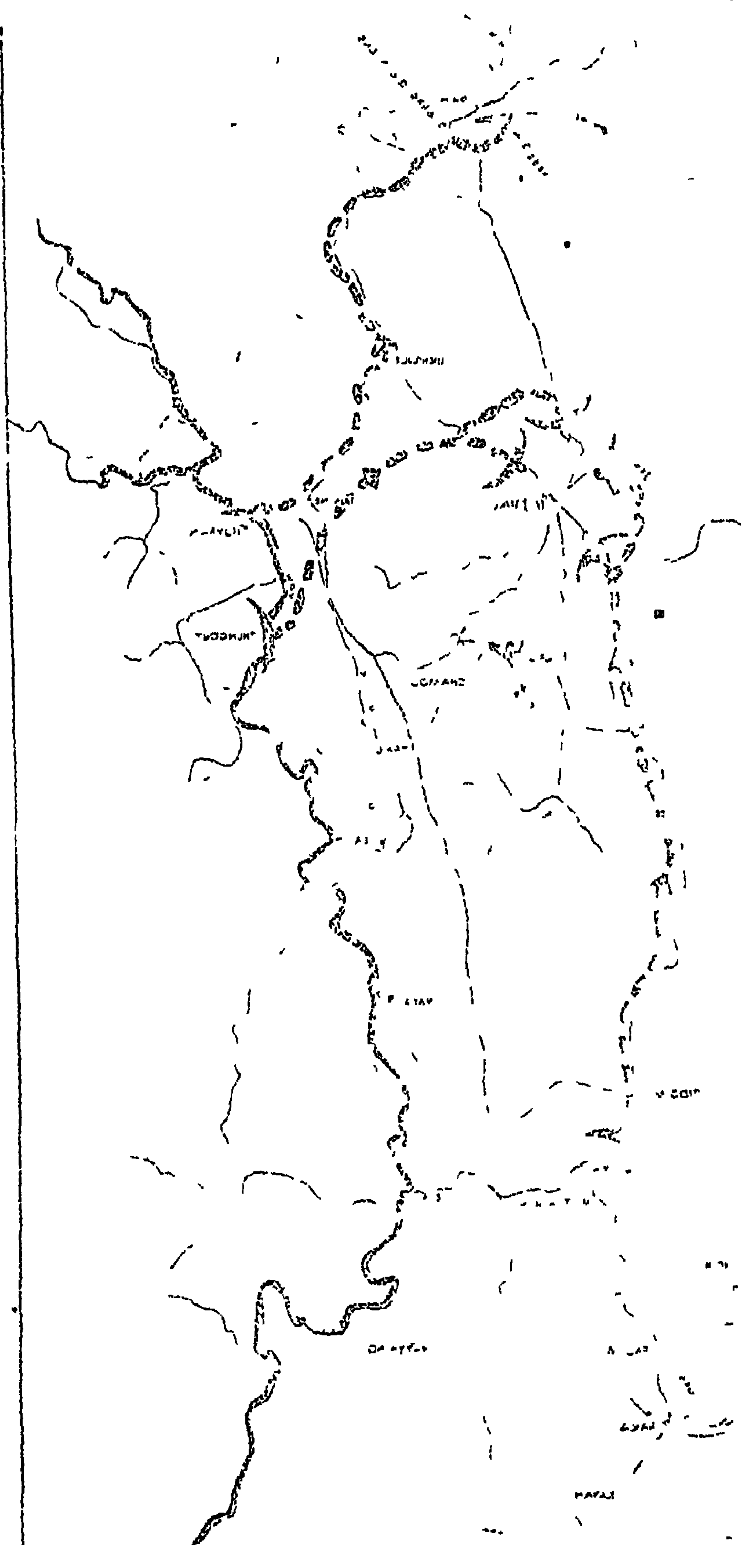
Kalewa In this connection Netaji issued a Special Order of the day which read as follows.—

"Comrades of Azad Hind Fauj,

In the middle of March this year, advanced units of the Azad Hind Fauj, fighting shoulder to shoulder with their valiant allies, the Imperial Nippon Forces, crossed the Indo-Burma border and the fight for India's liberation thereupon commenced on Indian soil.

The British Authorities, by ruthlessly exploiting India for over a century and Bringing foreign soldiers to fight their battles for them, had managed to put up a mighty force against us. After crossing the Indo-Burma border, inspired by the righteousness of our cause, encountered these numerically superior and better equipped, but heterogeneous and disunited forces of the enemy and defeated them in every battle Our units, with their better training and discipline and unshakable determination to do or die on the path of India's freedom, soon established their supeiority over the enemy, whose morale deteriorated with each defeat. Fighting under the most trying conditions our officers and men displayed such courage and heroism that they have earned the praise of every body With their blood and sacrifice these heroes have established traditions which the future soldiers of free India shall have to uphold All preparations had been completed and the stage had been set for the final assault on Imphal when torrential rains overtook us, and to carry Imphal by an assault was rendered a tactical impossibility Handicapped by the elements, we were forced to postpone our offencive. After the postponement of offensive, it was found disadvantageous for our troops to continue to hold the line that we then had For securing a more favourable defensive position, it was considered advisable to withdraw our troops. In accordance with this decision, our troops have withdrawn to a more favourable defensive position. We shall now utilise the period of lull in completing our preparations, so that with the advent of better weather, we may be in a position to resume our offensive Having beaten the enemy once in several sectors of the front, our faith in our final victory and in the destruction of the Anglo-American


MANIPORE OPERATION
SITUATION APRIL SEPTEMBER 1944
KOHIMA
UKHRUL
IMPHAL
HOMALIN
THUNGOUT
PALEL
TAMU
TIDDIM
FORT WHITE
KALEMYO
KALEWA
MAWLAIK
FALAM
HAKA
GANGAW
KYATTAUNG
LEGEND
I N A


MANIPORE OPERATION

forces of aggression has increased tenfold. As soon as all our preparatins are complete, we shall launch a mighty offensive against our enemies once again With the superior fighting qualities dauntless courage and unshakable devotion to duty of our officers and men, victory shall surely be ours.

Many of souls of those heroes, who have fallen in this campaign inspire us to still nobler deeds of heroism and bravery in the next phase of India's War of Liberation Jai Hind"

For the withdrawl from Tamu to Kalewa the Japanese General Headquarters issued the following orders to me "The No 1. Regt will withdraw to Kalewa a distance of 150 miles

"From Tamu the Regiment will withdraw to Ahlow a distance of 25 miles All the sick men were to be carried there under Regimental arrangement."

From Ahlow the Japanese promised to provide river transport for 400 seriously sick soldiers The remainder were to walk from Ahlow to Teraun from where river transport for the whole regiment was to be provided as far as Kalewa

About this time the soldiers of Gandhi and Azad Brigades had also been ordered to fall back on Kalewa They were given the Road Tamu-Yezagyo-Kalewa as the route of withdrawl.

At Tamu we were able to collect a few bullock carts with the help of which we transported our sick men to Ahlow on Yu river.

Here we found the river in flood and not even a single boat to transport our sick On this river bank we were held up for 7 days. Eventually, with the help of some Burmese boats our men got across At this stage our rations were completely exhausted and there appeared to be no prospects of receiving any fresh supplies Whatever little was available in the local village the Japanese had already commandeered for their own troops, and the I N. A was left to feed for itself It was at this stage that I made an entry in my diary on the July 7th "Men did not receive any ration . . . 4 Garhwalis have died of stravation We have approached the Japanese to do something for our rations. They seem not to take the least notice of

it I do not know what is the idea behind this deliberate starvation of our men"

Under these circumstances our men had to trek back in terrential monsoons with no shelter except a small ground through knee deep mud and through thick tropical forests infested with deadly malaria mosquitoes and poisonous leeches.

By this time all administration services had completely broken down. Doctors had no medicines left to treat anyone and most of the doctors and the medical staff were themselves suffering from Malaria and dysentry. At that time in the surrounding forest and on the track were millions of huge flies feasting on the human dead. There were some terrible scenes and no description can depict a real enough picture of it, and no one who has actually witnessed those scenes can ever forget them

On one occasion during the retreat I met a soldier who had been wounded in action He had walked back several miles and now he could walk no more He fell out on the side of the road and waited for death to come to him and relieve him of his miseries There were hundred of maggots in his wound and it would not be before he died long I stopped by his side. He opened his eyes and looked at me and tried to get up, but he had no strength left for that He signed to me to sit down by his side. He had a message which he wanted me to convey to Netaji With tears rolling down his young cheeks he began "Sahib, you are going back You will see Netaji, but I will not. Please convey my Jai Hind to him and tell him that I lived up to the promise I made to him Please also explain to him the way in which death came to me Tell him how I was eaten alive by maggots but please assure him that in this great suffering I found a strange peace and happiness. Peace and happiness because I realize, that all this suffering is for India's sake. For the liberation of my motherland" It was only one of the hundreds of similar instances that took place every day It is very difficult to explain what had brought about this change in our soldiers. Up to the very time of their death, the thought of their Netaji and the pro-

mise they had made to him was upper most in their minds

I know of hundreds of other instances where soldiers, suffering from dysentry and Beri, Beri with their legs and faces all swollen up, had fallen out, completely exhausted and it looked as if they would never be able to walk an inch further Their officer would come up to them and say "Have you forgotten the promise you made to your Netaji the promise that you would bear all hardships like a brave man Our Netaji is waiting for us 50 miles down the road at Kalewa Do you not wish to go and see him?" Saying this the officer would command the soldier to get up and walk These words used to have an almost magical effect on our exhausted soldiers. I have seen some of them crawling forward on their hands and knees determined to cover the last 50 miles just to have one glimpse of their Netaji Many of them were just able to complete the journey and as soon as they arrived there they collapsed and died happily because they had that last glimpse of their beloved leader

At Ahlow, the Japanese came to us and told us that the Regiment should march to Teraun where river transport for every one would be made available Carrying all our sick, now numbering approximately 600, we marched off to Teraun, a distance of 25 miles A large number of men died on this route as a result of exhaustion and starvation Finally, all the remnants arrived at Teraun, the place where we had been promised that river transport would be available for the whole regiment

On arrival at Teraun it was found to our great disappointment that not a single boat was available even to transport us across the Yu river

Teraun was a small camp, situated on the bank of the Yu river, on a hill-track running from Tamu-Yuwa on the Chindwin river It also had a small Japanese supply base This route had previously been used by the Japanese patriots and infiltration parties.

The Yu river due to the torrential rains, was in flood. Owing to its bed being of a rocky and precipitous nature there were

several rapids in it and only the most experienced and daring boatmen could dare to row on it, and that too only in special boats on certain occasions when the water level of the Chindwin river was higher than that of the Yu river and Chindwin water flowed into the Yu.

Here again, we were held up with not a hope of getting across. Things looked very dark for us indeed. Rations were running very short indeed The men were receiving only salt and $^3/_4$lb of rice a day and we were told that the reserve in Japanese supply would run out any day and there was no hope of securing a fresh supply.

The men were sent in all different directions in search of boats and eventually some boats arrived from Ahlow and transported the fit men across the river and they were ordered to March to Yuwa and then to Kalewa where motor transport was made available to carry them to Mandalay and other stations.

The greatest problem was that of 400 seriously sick men who were quite incapable of walking even a mile Eventually I decided to leave these 400 men there and proceed Yuwa and arrange for river transport to fetch these men down from Teraun This proved to be a very difficult thing and it took one month for us to evacuate our sick from Teraun during which period appoximately 50% of the perished through enemy bombing, disease and starvation.'

Once the men were able to reach Yuwa, the rest was easy as there were some country boats available to take the sick men down to Kalewa where an I N A. cam p had been started and where medical aid rations and motor transport were available

On arrival at Kalewa, the units of No. 1. Division were distributed in Burma as follows.—

Divisional H Q Mandalay.

1 Subhas Brigade at Budalin

2 Gandhi Brigade at Mandalay.

3 Azad Brigade at Choungoo

Most of the officers and men went straight into hospitals at Monywa and Maymyo.

Haka-Falam garrison after May 1944.

In mid-May 1944 after the attack and capture of Klang Klang post by Major Mahboob Ahmed, the main force of the Brigade was ordered to proceed to Kohima, but the responsibility of defending the Haka-Falam front was still to be that of No 1 Regt (Subhas Brigade) Consequently, a small detachment of approximately 100 fit and 150 sick was left at Haka under the command of Lieut Ranjodh Singh while a similar detachment was left behind at Falam

A skeleton supply, medical and control staff under the command of Major Thakur Singh was left at the Regimental base at Nauchang

As soon as the main body of the Regiment left Haka Falam the enemy became very active on that front Our posts were being attacked almost daily

The I. N A. Klang Klang post was the scene of much bitter fighting The morale of the enemy had risen considerably of late and they made determined efforts to capture our post and the Haka Base But thanks to the daring and fortitude of our men, these attacks were always beaten back and offensive operations against the enemy were continued by our forces.

Early in August 1944, after the failure of our assault on Imphal and the subsequent-retreat the British forces on the Haka front made a most determined attack to capture our Klang Klang post and the garrison at Haka They amassed approximately 600 men and started attacking Haka from all directions One strong detachment of the enemy encircled the Klang Klang post and occupied the mountain ridge between Haka and the Klang Klang post with the object of preventing any help from reaching our post

The enemy launched attack after attack well supported by artillery and aircraft but our men held on In the meantime realizing the critical situation that faced our men at Haka, Lt. Ranjodh Singh decided to leave a small detachment in Haka to hold the enemy attacks from the East And with the remaining fit men, approximately 60 in number, he decided to counter-attack the enemy who was

besieging our Klang Klang post He realized that the time was of the utmost importance and unless help reached the Klang Klang post quickly it might be overrun by the enemy Rallying his men around him, Lt Ranjodha Singh, explained the critical military situation to them He said our post is completely encircled by the enemy and unless we relieve the pressure on them, they may all be annihilated We must go to their aid and save them or we must all perish together These words were enough for our men who, fixing their bright steel bayonets on their rifles and led by their gallant commander charged into the enemy who were holding the ridge between Haka There were approximately 300 enemy soldiers on the ridge Our men were fighting against 1 to 5 odds and against much superior arms and equipment, but their spirit was irresistable With shouts of "Netaji ki Jai" and "Jai Hind" they dashed up the steep mountain ridge held by the enemy There was very bitter hand to hand fighting in which we suffered severe losses, but eventually the enemy had to withdraw to the next ridge Lt Ranjodh Singh's blood was boiling He had seen several of his comrades fall by his side and he had no intention of breaking off the engagement yet After reorganizing his small force he again attacked the enemy and drove him off from that ridge as well, and contact with our besieged post was also established. Lt Ranjodh Singh then proceeded to attack the enemy who had encircled the post and after much severe fighting was able to drive them back In this engagement the enemy left 22 dead on the battle field A large quantity of arms and ammunition was also captured by our men

About the middle of August orders were issued to Lt Ranjodh Singh to evacuate Haka Falam and rejoin the rear Regimental Head quarters at Nau Chang In torrential rain his men retreated to Falam, carrying all their sick and wounded on their shoulders On arrival at Falam they found that the suspension bridge over the Manipore river had been blown up by enemy guerillas, and that owing to heavy flood it was quite impossible to cross the Manipore river. There was no alternative for them but to return to Haka and attempt to reach Nauchang via Kan: but this route, too, they found completely blockaded

by the enemy who had now closed round them from all directions They had, therefore, to return to Falam again but this time luckily for them the Manipore River was not in such heavy flood and they were able to construct a temporary bridge and cross over to reach Nau Chang early in September From there they retreated to Kalewa and rejoined the remnants of the Brigade returning from Kohima

By this time our relations with the Japanese, which never at any time had been cordial, became very strained All of us were of the opinion that the Japanese, by not extending proper cooperation to us and by hampering our operations, had betrayed us and were mainly responsible for our failure to capture Imphal and for the extremely heavy casualties suffered by us. The feeling that existed at the time may be judged from the last word of dying I N A officer who said to me, "Sahib, please see that my grave is not next to that of a Japanese"

During the retreat there were several instances where serious clashes took place between the Japanese and our men, and at Kindat and Yuwa we had regular machine gun battles.

When the Haka garrison was returning to Kalewa the Japanese captured one of our small detachments of approximately 10 men in the early hours of the morning and bayonetted them as enemy spies, after tying them up to the trees, most of them died but a few lived with as many as 10 bayonet wounds to tell the ghastly story. When the facts of this incident were made known to Netaji he was very much enraged and the matter was taken up by him and settled direct with Tokyo Head Quarters

It is difficult to explain why the Japanese acted towards the I N. A in such a manner The only explanation that I can think of is that in the earlier stages of the battle they were too sure of themselves and of capturing Imphal It is quite likely, in fact probable, that they had certain designs on India and they were afraid of allowing the I N A to become too powerful and one day turning round and fighting the Japanese in case of their betrayal This they had judged by their intimate contact with the I. N. A. officers and men

I can quite confidently assert that even Netaji did not trust the Japanese His idea was that the I. N. A must be made as powerful as possible and that our surest guarantee against possible Japanese betrayal was our own strength. Netaji considered, and quite rightly too, that our strength would go on increasing immensely as we advance further inland into India and that we must be prepared at all times to fight all aggressors be they British or Japanese. His appreciation was that in their own interests the Japanese could not afford to antagonize India and create a similar situation as they had created in China where huge Japanese forces had been lodged

I arrived at Kalewa from Kindat early in September 1944 and then proceeded to Yeu and Budalin to reconnoitre for the Regiment On or about the 23rd September, 1944, I proceeded to Mandalay and reported to Netaji. This was our first meeting after I had left Rangoon for the front in February 1944.

Activities of No. 1. Division during the Imphal operations.

After the brilliant activities of the I. N. A in the Arakans, and in the Chin Hill, under the distinguished leadership of Shaheed Major L S Misra, Sardar-e-Jang, and Major P S. Raturi, Sardar-e-Jang, the preliminary doubts of the Japanese regarding the fighting capacity of the I N A. were removed and Netaji's hands were considerably strengthened. He was then in a position to force the Japanese to send more I. N A. units to the front The mobilization and preparation for the final move to the front of the other units of the No. 1 Division were immediately taken into hand

Subsequently the No 2 Guerilla Rgt. (Gandhi Brigade) and the Divisional Headquarter moved to Burma early in March, and after a short rest at Rangoon they started moving to the front early in April. The route and condition under which they travelled were the same as those faced by the Subhas Brigade

The Division was commanded by Major General (then Colonel) M. Z Kiani, who was undoubtedly one of the most brilliant and daring Commanders of the I. N. A. The Gandhi Brigade was com-



Who commanded Nehru Brigade during Irrawady Operations



Who commanded Gandhi Brigade during Imphal Operations



Col. Thakur Si

Who was 2nd in Command of Subhas Brigade during Manipur operations, and later commanded the regiment on its historic track back to Bangkok



Lt. Col. Mehar Das
Sardar-i-Jung

Who distinguished himself in the Arakans in cutting off 5th and 7th Indian divisions around Maungdaw and Buthidaung. Later he was Gen Staff Officer to No. 2 divisions

manded by Colonel I J. Kiani who was a cousin of Gen M Z. Kiani It was a formidable continuation and great things were expected from them Col I. J Kiani was well known for his perseverence and doggedness

While moving to the front they were told by the Japanese that they were too late, and that in all probability Imphal would fall before they arrived there, so by extremely hard and forced marches they arrived at Kalewa early in April 1944 Here Col. I J Kiani and the Divisional commander were too late to take part in the attack on Imphal, as it had either already fallen or would do so in a few hours time. They were advised to leave all their heavy baggage, including machine guns and hand grenades at Kalewa and reach Imphal as soon as possible All that they required, their Japanese Liaison Officers told them was one blanket, a rifle and 50 rounds of ammunition The rest they were assured would be available in huge quantities at Imphal

In this state the Gandhi Brigade rushed to the front eager not to be left behind at the time of the final assualt on Imphal It was the desire of every officer and man to be the first in that assault.

On arrival at Tamu, the Divisional commander found out that Imphal had not fallen yet and that severe fighting was going on in the vicinity of Palel. He contacted the Japanese commander on the Palel front and in cooperation with him and with Major Fujiwara (of Singapore fame) who was now a Staff officer in the Japanese General headqurters, it was decided that the No 1 Division would have an independent sector to the west of the main Tamu-Palel road and from there carry out guerilla activity against the enemy forces on the Tamu front and against the enemy aerodrome at Palel

The Divisional Head Quarters were established at Chamol and the Regimental H Q at Mithun Khunou.

The Tamu-Palel road being the most important line of advance, the British had amassed very powerful forces on this front They had one Division holding this front with one brigade to the east of the Road with a strong point in the neighbourhood of the Laimatol Hill. One brigade was to the west of the Road with strongest

points on Yapu ridges and one brigade in support in the neighbourhood of Palel Aerodrome These units were strongly supported by artillery and aeroplanes Thus the Gandhi Brigade was faced by most powerful British forces and had to bear the brunt of some of the heaviest fighting in that area without any artillery or air support and with the additional disadvantage of having left behind at Kalewa all their heavy equipment including machine guns, hand grenades and entrenching tools.

In addition to the I N A there was one Japanese Brigade, supported by artillery, operating on the main road and to east of it

Attack on Palel Aerodrome

Early in May 1944 Major Fujiwara came to Gen. Kiani and informed him that the Japanese were going to launch a general attack on the Palel aerodrome and wanted to know if the I N A would also like to take part in the attack. He assured Gen Kiani that the capture of Palel by the Japanese forces was almost a foregone conclusion but he was keen that the I N A. should also participate in it Consequently, a plan of attack on the Palel aerodrome in co-operation with the Japanese forces was worked out by Gen Kiani and orders were issued to Col. I J Kiani to put it into execution

A striking force of approximately 300 strong under the command of Maj Pritam Singh, was detailed to carry out this operation. The force started off, armed only with light automatics and rifles carrying only one day's rations with them They covered approximately 40 miles over very steep and rocky mountains and successfully managed to infiltrate through the enemy's forward defences and reached the suburbs of the Palel Aerodrome The attack was planned to take place at about midnight, so for the day they lay very low, hiding themselves among thick shrubs in deep ravines As soon as darkness fell they started to advance in the direction of the aerodrome On arriving near it, Major Pritam Singh found that there were strong piquets posted on the hills around the aerodrome, and he realized that it was not possible to attack the aerodrome without first attacking those piquets. He, therefore, detailed one party under

Capt Sadhu Singh to encircle and capture one of those piquets, and the remainder under another officer to infiltrate through and attack the aerodrome.

The British piquet was a very strong one and had machineguns fixed in it Our soldiers advanced very silently under cover of darkness and with fixed bayonets had made a surprise night raid on the enemy post The enemy was completely at a loss to know what to do They put up their hands and said in Hindustani to our soldiers," Sathi Ham ko mat maro", the I N A. soldiers had orders not to shoot or kill any Indian soldiers, unless they were attacked first The officer halted our men, and accompanied by Lieut Lal Singh and Lt Mohan Singh entered the post to accept its surrender In the meantime, the very post commander asked our officer," What is that you want" Lt Lal Singh, who was in front and was armed only with a Naga spear, replied, "I want the blood of those two English officers who are hiding in that corner" Saying this he charged at them The men inside the piquet opened fire on them and Lt Lal Singh was mortally wounded But before he fell he had killed with his spear both those officers Realizing that they had been treacherously misled, our men under the command of Major Pritam Singh made repeated attacks on the British post but it was so heavily surrounded by barbed wire that they were unable to capture it. By this time it was nearly daybreak and Major Pritam Singh decided to call a halt and to retreat to his Regimental Head Quarters

In the meantime, the other party had successfully infiltrated through and captured the aerodrome, but they found no trace of the Japanese there and since they were not strong enough to hold the aerodrome by themselves they withdrew after destroying all the aeroplanes concentrated there

While all this was going on Col. I J Kiani with the remainder of his Brigade, had advanced and occupied Upaw ridge so as to be in a position to support Major Pritam's Singh force As soon as daylight broke enemy artillery and aeroplanes became very active and

carried out a ceaseles bombing and shelling of our force for the whole day. Our men, under Major Pritam Singh, had nothing to eat for the last three days On that day the Gandhi Brigade suffered very heavy casualties and we lost approximately 250 men.

One very notable feature of this operation was that Major Ali Akbar Khan, who was the Regimental Medical officer of this Brigade, went right upto the front line and during the heaviest bombing and shelling he went from man to man dressing their wounds and carrying out minor operations He had no immaculate instruments of surgery All he had was a pair of ordinary scissors and a cut-throat razor, and with these he carried on his duty in that pandamonium and hell, quite oblivious of his personal safety in a manner that any country would feel proud of. His death in September 1944, in the I. N. A. hospital at Monywa deprived the Azad Hind Fauj of one its best and most loved officers This attack on the aerodrome came as rude shock to the British who now decided to counter attack and drive back the Gandhi Brigade from Mithan Khunou.

Seaforth Highlanders Attack Mithan Khunou

After the Palel Aerodrome attack, the enemy patrol activity increased very considerably. One daring British officer managed to creep up to our sentries on several occasion and to shoot them at their posts Col Kiani then laid on ambush for him and finally dispossed him off.

A few days later, the British Battalion strongly supported by heavy artillery, attacked our foremost company in the vicinity of Mythun Khunou. The leading platoon of this company was commanded by a young Second Lieutenant. Ajai Singh who had been trained at the I.N A. Officers' Training School in Singapore

The Scottish soldiers of the Sea Forth Highlanders knowing that they were up against the I N A attacked fiercely. The soldiers of the I N.A. had also been waiting for this day It was the first battle of the Gandhi Brigade against white troops, and at the very sight of them they became wild Challenges were thrown out by both

sides, and a grim battle at close quarters ensued The British soldiers came almost upto the trenches occupied by our men, but time and again, they were beaten back with heavy losses.

After their first setback, the British fell back and after reorganizing their troops they attacked again, this time supported by artillery and aeroplanes, but the gallant platoon of the I N A led by their brave commander, held firm and continued to beat back attack after attack Eventually being unable to make any headway against the I N A soldiers, the enemy called a halt and withdrew to their defences But, Ajaib Singh had no intention of ending the engagement yet. Rallying his men, and collecting ammunition from the British dead and wounded left behind by the attackers, Lt. Ajajb Singh advanced from his position and approached the nearest British defence post and shouted to them challenging them to come out and fight and not hide behind their defences and barbed wire fences. The British accepted the challenge and another grim battle started, this time with British on the defensive. Lt, Ajaib Singh had captured a large number of rifles and grenades in the first engagemnt and he wished to use them against the British, but he did not have the proper ballistite grenade cartridges So, against all rules and regulation of millitary training he used 303 Ball ammunition to fire rifle grenades This worked well, and in that engagement he fired as many as 50 grenades When the darkness fell, Lt Ajaib Singh, having returned the enemy's courtesy call, came back to his lines. His small force had suffered severe losses, but he had inflicted far greater losses on the enemy In addition, he had taught them to be more respectful and cautious when attacking the Azad Hind Fauj In the day's engagement, the enemy suffered at least 50 casualties in killed and wounded, while our losses were 10 killed and a few slightly wounded Our remarkable feature of this engagement was that majority of the I.N A. troops participating in it were raw Tamil recruits from Malaya. It was their first engagement, but they acquitted themselves most creditably and smashed the British theory of martial and non-martial classes. They proved in this engagement that Indians, whether classed

as martial or non-martial by the British, could, when aroused, fight most heroically and make supreme sacrifices for the liberation of their motherland.

By this time heavy rains had set in and made the ration and ammunition supply a most difficult problem. Due to the lack of proper food and medicines, the health of the troops deteriorated rapidly and by the middle of June, 1944, they had become so weak that they could hardly walk a few miles, but despite this they stuck to their posts and in the face of repeated British attacks never retreated even an inch before them At about this time the tide of the battle had turned. The British had managed to substantially reinforce their beleaguered garrison in Imphal, and were now in a position to launch the main offensive.

Their first move was to capture the heights occupied by the men of "Gandhi Brigade" around Mythun Khunou This time it was an attack launched by a whole British Brigade, 3,000 strong, supported by heavy artillery and aeroplanes Our old rivals, the "Seaforth", again led the attack.

By a clever encircling movement, they surrounded one of our companies commanded by Capt. Rao, and it looked as if they would annihilate our force The situation looked extremely grave All the commanding heights and strategic points were in enemy hands Besides this the strength of the Gandhi Brigade was very much depleted owing to widespread illness and battle casualties In this particular action there were 600 I N A men opposing approximately 3,000 well-fed British soldiers having infinitely superior arms and equipment. Our men fought most heroically Col I J. Kiani, the Brigade commander, himself was in the area of the company that was encircled by the British He realized that unless the strategic heights were recaptured by them his garrison would be annihilated. He, therefore, issued orders to his officers to take possession of those heights at any cost Lt. Mansukh Lall was ordered to recapture one of the heights He was commanding a platoon consisting of approximately 30 men. With this small force he counter-attacked without any

artillery covering fire, and recaptured one of the strongest posts occupied by the enemy While leading his small, and semi-starved force up the steep ridge, he was wounded 13 times, through exhaustion and loss of blood, he staggered and fell to the ground His men seeing their gallant commander fall hesitated and slowed down their pace Lt. Mansukh Lall, like a tiger that is mortally wounded but is determined to make the last charge, roared to his men and exhorted them to continue their advance and not to worry about him They were very near the summit, and making a last supreme effort, with 13 bullet wounds in his body, he rose to his feet and personally led the final assault on the height which was to decide the fate of Gandhi Brigade that day.

The enemy, having no stomach for a bloody hand to hand fight, did not relish the idea of facing the cold bright steel bayonets of the men of the Azad Hind Fauj, retreated, leaving the height in possession of the I N A men The most important point was thus recaptured and the unit saved

While this company under the command of Lt Rao was fighting to break the steel round it, another company under the command of Lt Ajaib Singh was sent forward by the Battalion Commander to counterattack the British and to extricate Lt Rao's company This company advanced and by a very clever manoeuvre encircled the British troops who were besieging the Brigade Headquarters and Lt. Rao's company The enemy were taken completely by surprise, and realizing that their line of retreat had been cut off, broke off the engagement with Lt Rao's company and tried to break through Lt. Ajaib Singh's company, but all possible routes of withdrawal had been blocked They were caught between two rings of fire and suffered extremely heavy casualties It was a terrible massacre The whole battalion was strewn with the dead bodies of "Tommies" and it was estimated that in this engagement the emey lost at least 250 men, killed or severely wounded This battle of annihilation had lasted throughout the day and when evening came, the enemy broke off the engagement and retreated to lick their wounds In this battle our men had dealt such a crushing blow to the enemy's morale that for some considerable

time afterwards, they did not dare to attack any of our post.

By this time it was nearing the end of June, 1944. Extremely heavy monsoons had started and the Tamu-Palel road, the only line of supply was washed away by torrential streams. Our men did not have adequate protection from rain and all supplies of rations and ammunition was cut off. The situation was extremely grave, and it looked as if our men would have to fall back due to lack of supplies. Col. Inayat Kiani had, however, no such intention. He said, "If we cannot be supplied with rations from Tamu, we must make arrangements for collecting rations in our own area." He was at that time occupying approximately 200 square miles of Indian territory All this territory was being administered by him, through the Azad Hind Dal unit send up by Netaji, which had been especially trained in the administration of "liberated areas".

He called a conference of all the prominent Naga Chiefs and explained the gravity of the ration situation to them, and told them that unless sufficient rations could be collected locally, his troops would have to withdraw to Tamu. The "Nagas" implored Col. Kiani not to retreat and said, "You are the army of India's liberation. You must not go back. We are extremely short of food ourselves, but we will collect whatever we can for you. We will live or starve to death together."

They returned to their areas and brought back whatever rations they could collect But, it was not an easy matter for a mountainous and unproductive area to maintain a large force of approximately 2,000 men for a long period. These rations were soon exhausted, and again in few days the rations situation began as grave as before

The "Nagas" who were a hill tribe residing in mountains all round Imphal, were most helpful to our troops. They were a brave and patriotic tribe and they cooperated with us in every possible way They helped and guided our patrols, brought back valuable information regarding the movement and disposition of the enemy, and supplied rations Some of them were extremely bitter against the British Their Queen, they said, had been arrested and taken away to India

by the British One remarkable feature of the Naga character was that they refused to cooperate in any way with the Japanese, and for doing so in Japanese occupied areas some of them had to pay heavy penalties. They said, "We do not want the British, neither do we want the Japanese in our area All that we would like to have is our own Raja, Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose"

At about this time a very unfortunate incident took place, Major B J S Garewal, the Second-in-Command of Gandhi Brigade, being unable to face the hardships of the battle any longer, deserted to the British side. His desertion was a very sad blow to the morale of our troops He had done extremely good work in training the Gandhi Brigade in Malaya and during the actual fighting in the early stages of the Imphal campaign

Early in July, 1944, the enemy having reorganized and being fully informed of the conditions under which our men were fighting attacked again They managed, with the aid of some local spies, to infiltrate through our much depleted lines and encircled the entire Gandhi Brigade By this time, due to heavy battle casualties, disease and starvation, our front line strength had diminished from 2,000 to 1,000 men, and these too were in very indifferent health The enemy launched a particularly fierce attack against the Brigade Headquarters. The situation looked very grave, but Major Abid Hussain, who had now replaced Major Garewal as the Brigade Second-in-Command, managed to break through the encirclement with one company. After recognizing this small force Major Hussain counterattacked and after a fierce battle was able to extricate the Gandhi Brigade from a very dangerous and critical situation

In the evening the Gandhi Brigade counter-attacked the enemy who had captured the Mythun heights. In this battle Major Hassan, Lt Rama Rao and Capt Taj Mohammad displayed outstanding gallantry, and were awarded the much prized medal of Sardar-e-Jang.

By early July the entire aspect of the campaign had changed The Azad Hind Fauj and the Japanese forces that had been holding Kohima had fallen back on Tamu. To the west of Imphal the Japa-

nese and the I. N A forces which had been attacking Imphal from the direction of Bishenpore had to fall back on Tiddim and there was a danger that the line of retreat of the Gandhi Brigade might be cut off. In addition to this, after the retreat of our forces from Kohima, the British rushed huge reinforcements of men and material to Imphal, with the object of starting a large scale offensive against the Japanese in Burma The full weight of this fell on Gandhi Brigade, which was eventually ordered to retreat to Kalewa along the main Kalewa-Tamu Road The condition under which the retreat was carried out were the same as those experienced by the Subhas Brigade.

Activities of the Azad Brigade.

Soon after the departure of the Gandhi Brigade from Malaya, the "Azad Brigade" also started It arrived in Rangoon during the later part of April, 1944, and after a short rest it proceeded to Tamu via Kalewa On arrival at Tamu in mid-May, its commander, Col. Gulzara Singh, went and reported to the Divisional Commander, Gen. M. Z Kiani, at Chamol and received instructions regarding the employment of his brigade from him The task allotted to the Azad Brigade was that of carrying out intensive guerilla activity against the British forces around Palel. The area of operations allotted to them was to the East of the Tamu-Palel road, with Brigade Headquarters in the vicinity of Mintha

The Brigade went into action and prepared the bases of operation, but before they could launch a large-scale offensive against the enemy, the rains set in and Col Gulzara Singh had to order his unit to withdraw under orders from the Divisional Commander The Azad Brigade withdrew to Kalewa via the main Kalewa-Tamu road at the same time as the Gandhi Brigade

Activities of the I.N.A. units during Imphal Campaign.

No 1 —Engineering Company.

This company moved into Burma early in 1944, and was sent to the Homalin-Thawiugdut sector It was originally commanded by Lt Shcinde, but later Capt Pritam Singh took over its command During the operations, they were allotted the task of building bridges

and repairing the Tamu-Humine-Ukhrul road They did excellent work throughout the operations and kept the road in good state of repair throughout the monsoons They withdrew with the rest of the I N A forces to Kalewa

No 2 —Motor Transport Company

This company was raised in Singapore in August, 1943, soon after Netaji's arrival Most of its personnel was made up of the civilian volunteers, who in response to Netaji's call, joined the company in large numbers Some of the drivers who owned private cars and lorries, donated these to the I N A and joined as ordinary drivers They were placed under the command of Capt Harnam Singh, a very able and hardworking officer, who by his fact and ability created an excellent morale throughout his unit They were moved to Burma in September, 1943.

During the operations, they operated between Mandalay and Kalewa, and did excellent work in transporting men and material to the front In July 1944, when the No 1 Division had to retreat to Kalewa, the No 1 M T Company was operating between Kalewa and Yeu—It was during this time (July-October, 1944) that they did their best work In torrential rains they undertook the evacuation of the No 1 Division to Yeu The men returning from the front were in a terrible state of health, but for the excellent work done by this company most of them would have perished on the way They had only about 20 old lorries with which they had to evacuate approximately 7,000 men to a distance of 100 miles, over very difficult roads, through knee deep mud and across streams which were generally in flood The majority of these lorries were in workshops most of the time, and it was indeed a very creditable performance to keep them on the road at all In addition to this they had great difficulty in obtaining petrol and engine oil, and it was mainly through the efforts of Mr. Zora Singh, a civilian from Rangoon, and Col R M Arshad that these items could be procured mainly from the black market Our allies refused to issue any spare parts or engine oil to our lorries Later, during the evacuation of the No 1 Division from Mandalay to

Pyinmana, they did most creditable service in evacuating two large hospitals, supply and ordinance depots and approximately 2,000 sick men

The company and its commander deserve to be congratulated for their excellent work throughout.

By the end of September 1944, the units of the No. 1 Division had concentrated in the rest areas, as under :—

Divisional Headquarters	...	Mandalay.
No 1 (Subhas Brigade)		Budalin.
No 2 (Gandhi Brigade)	..	Mandalay.
No 3 (Azad Brigade)	...	Choungou.

I N. A Base hospitals were located at Maymayo and Manywa.

Thus ended the main I N A. and Japanese offensive which had been started in March, 1944 During this period, the I N. A with much inferior equipments and an extremely poor supply system, was able to advance as much as 150 miles into Indian territory While the I. N A was on the offensive, there was not a single occasion on which our forces were defeated on the battle-field, and there was never an occasion when the enemy despite her overwhelming superiority in men and material was able to capture any post held by the I N A On the other hand there were very few cases where I.N.A attacked British post and failed to capture them

In these operations the I N. A suffered nearly 4,000 men as killed alone.

It is very well known by every one that it was only on account of sheer bad luck that the I N A and the Japanese failed to take Imphal They came very near to capturing it; and at one time they were only 2 miles away from it The British themselves tried several times to evacuate their forces from Imphal and retreat to Dimapore, but the road at Kohima was blocked by the I N A and the Japanese. Had this road been left open to the British they would certainly have retreated from Imphal But, our object was to capture all the British forces and war material intact at Imphal

Imphal is situated in a plain which is surrounded on all sides by

huge mountain ranges running through which are narrow roads which were the only lines of retreat that the British forces followed and once these roads were blocked, the escape of the British forces from Imphal became impossible

Netaji's own idea was that the I N A, as it was then, was not powerful enough to undertake a full-scale invasion of India, and at the same time fight successfully against a possible Japanese betrayal. He was, therefore, of the opinion that the 5 British Divisions composed of nearly $1\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs of Indians must be captured intact so that they could be pursuaded to join the I. N A to fight for India's liberations, and that with the captured war material all the deficiencies of the I N.A. in artillery and other essential war material could be made up.

With all the lines of retreat cut off, the British forces were obliged to fight with their backs to the wall. They had only two alternatives-either to surrender unconditionally or to fight on They decided to fight on, although the situation was very critical for them. They formed a "Box defence", which is a special type of defence in which armoured cars and tanks are put all round the camp to form a steel ring, inside which the infantry takes shelter. Unfortunately for us, the Japanese airforce which had been holding complete air superiority in the earlier stages of the battle, was obliged to move to the Pacific Islands, where the Americans had attacked and intensive naval and air fighting was in progress. It was indeed very unfortunate that the Japanese airforce had to be transferred, because had it stayed on it would have been possible for it to smash the British "Box defences" At the same time taking advantage of the absence of the Japanese Airforce, the British brought one full division by air from the Arakans Had the Japanese Airforce been there it would probably have made it impossible for the British to bring this division from the Arakan front. For nearly three months, the British forces in Imphal were supplied by air A superior Japanese airforce would have made this impossible and would probably have led to British surrender. Another reason for our failure to capture Imphal was that we started the offensive too late The Japanese General staff thought that they would be able

to capture Imphal by the middle of May at the latest, and that soon afterwards the monsoons would start, giving us time to consolidate our gains so as to make a British counter-offensive impossible On the other hand, if the situation was favourable, the Azad Hind Fauj and Japanese forces at Kohima could advance and cross the Brahmaputra into Bengal and Bihar Unfortunately, this calculation went wrong and when the monsoons started, the I N A and the Japanese were still struggling to occupy Imphal Eventually, towards the end of June, 1944, it had become almost impossible to supply rations of ammunition to our forces fighting on the front. Rain and mud were the two great enemies that forced us to abandon our siege of Imphal.

Lastly, and with a clear conscience I can say that the Japanese did not give full aid and assistance to the Azad Hand Fauj during their assault on Imphal In fact, I am right in saying that they let us down badly and had it not been for their betrayal of the I N A the history of the Imphal campaign might have been a different one My own impression is that the Japanese did not trust the I N A They had found out through their Liaison officers that the I.N.A. would not accept Japanese domination in any way, and that they would fight the Japanese in case they attempted to replace the British The Japanese were frightened of making the I N A. too powerful They were too confident of themselves and thought that they would be able to capture Imphal without assistance and without much difficulty The words of the Japanese Commander-in-Chief at Maymyo, used during the course of a conversation with me, go to support this In February, 1944, when asked what he thought of the British forces in Imphal, he said, "Of the British forces I think nothing" Of course he was speaking from past experience He was one of the chief commanders who had forced the British to surrender in Singapore

Thus ended our first offensive, I am afraid, in a tragic fashion

At the end of September, 1944, Netaji was at Yeu, where he met the troops returning from the front line A few days later he returned to Mandalay, where he held a conference of Divisional and all Brigade commanders of the No. 1 Division At this conference all

commanders were unanimous in their conviction that the Japanese had let us down, particularly the "Hikari-Kikan", the Japanese Liaison department attached to the I N A It was, therefore, resolved that this Department should be done away with and we should have direct dealings with the Japanese Government in Tokyo and with the Japanese General Headquarters in Burma

Early in October 1944, Netaji went to Maymyo where we inspected the base hospital There were nearly 2,000 patients in that hospital, most of whom were in a terrible condition due to septic gun shot wounds, dysentry and malaria There was a detachment of the Rani of Jhansi Regiment girls working as nurses in this hospital Their number was of course most inadequate compared to the amount of work they had to do One of these girls Bela Dutt, a young Bengali girl of 16 years of age, was looking after 85 cases of acute dysentry She used to wash their clothes, give the men a sponge-bath, and help them to dress I will never forget that day when Netaji was going round the hospital from bed to bed How each one of those sick soldier adored their nurses They told Netaji, "Even our mothers and sisters could not have looked after us better" There were tears in Netaji's eyes. He complimented Bela on her work and went on.

She was looking after 85 patients and she knew by heart the full history of each case! That day in recognition of her excellent work she was promoted from Naik to Havildar.

I admire the Rani of Jhansi Regiment girls for their courage, fortitude and devotion to duty Their hospital was bombed and machine-gunned almost daily by the British aircraft and at least on two occasions some of them were buried under the debris of the house in which they were living But nothing seemed to affect the morale of these brave daughters of Mother India

Another incident that befell during that visit to the hospital was when Netaji went upto a soldier who was in an extremely bad way due to Beri Beri His face was all swollen. Netaji jokingly said to him, "When are you going to get well" His reply was prompt— "Netaji, I will be absolutely fit the very day you give us orders to

advance again."

While inspecting the hospital Netaji found that the hospital was extremely short of medicines, especially for dysentry. Feeling sorry for the poor men, Netaji decided to give them a treat He ordered "Jallaibi" to be prepared in his house and sent to the hospital Next day he went to the hospital again, and asked a dysentry patient if he had received his share of *jallaibi* and how he liked it The soldier replied " Netaji I thoroughly enjoyed it, in fact it has done me more good than the doctor's medicine Please send me some more" After this Netaji was known as a *Jallaibi Doctor.*

Netaji returns to Rangoon.

On the 11th October, 1944, Netaji left Mandalay for Rangoon, after inspecting all the front line troops He was accompanied by his personal staff and the Divisional and Brigade Commanders of the No. 1 Division While at Mandalay, Netaji had received on the 9th. October an official invitation from the Japanese Government to visit Tokyo for discussions on certain vital points concerning our future course of action. Such discussions between the Japanese Government and Netaji were quite common The Japanese had developed a great respect for Netaji's ability as a statesman and they used to consult him not only in matters relating to India, but also on other vital matters connected with Japanese Foreign Policy We on our side, also welcomed the invitation as it had given us an opportunity to decide upon our future course of action in the light of the experience gained on the battle field during the operations around Imphal

On arrival in Rangoon, a meeting of the cabinet was held. Netaji explaining the war situation to the civilian members of the cabinet said,

"We started operations too late. The monsoon was disadvantageous to us Our roads were submerged River traffic had to be against current Against this the enemy had first-class roads. Our only chance was to take Imphal before the rain started, and we would have succeeded if we had more air support and if their forces in Im-

phal had not special orders to make a stand to the last man If we had started in January we would have succeeded In all sectors, till the rains began, we either held the enemy or advanced In the Arakan Sector the enemy was held In the Kaladan Sector, we routed the enemy and advanced In Tiddim we advanced In Palel and Kohima also we advanced In the Haka Sector we held them. And these all, in spite of the numerical superiority that the enemy had, plus equipment and rations

"When the rains came we had to postpone the general assault on Imphal The enemy was able to send mechanised divisions and thus was able to retake the Kohima—Imphal Road. The question then arose where we should hold the line There were two courses open . Either hold on to the Bishenpur-Palel Line and not allow the enemy to advance . or fall back and hold a more advantageous position . . .

"What are the lessons we have learnt from this Campaign ? We have received our baptism of fire. A body of ex-civilians who were ordered to withdraw when the ammunition was exhausted, preferred not to withdraw, and with fixed bayonets they charged the enemy They came back victorious. .

"Our troops have gained much confidence We have learnt that the Indian troops with the enemy are willing to come over. We must now make arrangements to take them over We have learnt the tactics of the enemy. We have captured enemy documents The experience gained by our Commanders has been invaluable Before the campaign started, the Japanese had no confidence in our troops and wanted to break them up into batches attached to the Japanese Army I wanted a front to be given to our men and this was ultimately given Our Divisional Commander and other Officers have gained much experience from this campaign.

"We have also learnt our defects Transport and supply were defective owing to the difficult terrain We had no front line propaganda. Though we had prepared personnel for this, we could no use it owing to lack of transport. Henceforth each Unit of the I.N.A.

will have a propaganda unit attached to it We wanted loud speakers but the Japanese failed to supply them to us We are now making our own"

After this it was unanimously resolved that we would continue the fight to the better end, until the emancipation of our country was achieved. It was decided that we would fight the British wherever we meet them For this purpose, and in view of the increasing strength of the enemy it was considered necessary to intensify our own effort and to bring about a total mobilization of all the resources of the Indians in East Asia.

One great weakness that we discovered during our operations around Imphal was that we were too dependent on the Japanese for rations, medicines, etc. It was, therefore, decided to eliminate all these defects in future operations A supply department was started and Sri Parmanand was appointed Supply Minister The next resolution asked for the abolition of the Japanese Liaison Department—"The Hikari-Kikan"—through which we dealt with the Japanese Government and for the establishment of direct contact with the Tokyo Government It was, therefore, decided to start a new department of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind—the Foreign Department and General Chatterjee was appointed Foreign Minister An exchange of Ambassadors with Japan was also agreed upon

Lastly, for direction of all future operations of the I N A a War Council was elected It was considered that the Cabinet was too large for this task, and the necessity of a small and more efficient Council was felt. The following were elected members of the "War Council":—

1. Netaji
2. General Bhonsle
3 General Chatterji.
4. General M. Z. Kiani
5. Col. Aziz Ahmad
6. Col. Ehsan Qadir
7. Col. Habibur Rehman.

8 Col. Gulzara Singh
9 Sri Parmanand
10 Sri Raghavan.
11. Col I J Kiani.
12. Col. Shahnawaz Khan

In accordance with the decision to intensify our War effort, a recruiting campaign to increase the strength of the I N. A was started. Training centres for civilian recruits at Ipoh, Kualalumpur, Penang, Singapore, and Rangoon were expanded As a result of this the strength of the I N A was increased considerably and ultimately it reached a figure of 50,000 strong At the same time the No 2 Division of the I. N. A. was ordered to move to Burma and a third division under the command of Colonel G R Nagar was raised. Advanced units of the No. 2 Division began to reach Rangoon early in October, 1944

Netaji left Rangoon for Tokyo early in November accompanied by General Chatterji, Gen. Kiani and Col Habibur Rehman. Before his departure, Col Aziz Ahmad was appointed to officiate as Supreme Commander in his absence, and I was appointed Commander of the No 1 Division in place of Gen M Z Kiani who was appointed General Secretary to the War Council. Netaji also issued orders that all the I N A troops around Mandalay were to withdraw to Pyinmana a distance of 200 miles I returned to Mandalay in December, 1944, and took the evacuation of No 1 Division in hand. We had to surmount great difficulties Transport was most inadequate Railway lines were almost always out of action due to heavy bomber raids Eventually, by the end of January, 1945, the evacuation of the No. 1 Division and the hospitals in Maymyo and Monywa was completed and a new Divisional Camp was established at Pyinmana

By this time Netaji and his party had returned from Tokyo The Japanese Government agreed to all points put up by Netaji. It was, therefore, decided to send the No 2 Division of the I. N. A. to take part in the operations in the vicinity of Popa hill.

NETAJI WEEK

(Extracts from the diary of a Rebel daughter)

July 4, 1944.

Subhas Babu arrived from the front on the 2nd. He has been touring the whole front for the last two months and has personally inspired the soldiers of the Fauj.

To-day begins "Netaji Week". To-day last year Subhas Babu took over the leadership of the East Asia movement at the Syonan Conference Fourth of July ! Three million Indians stood united behind Subhas Babu on the 4th of July last year and swore that "Freedom or Death" shall be their solgan

The Jubilee Hall was packed to capacity once again today. Loud speakers were also installed outside on the road The whole scene looked paved with human heads instead of cobble-stones The road outside, the steps, the hall and its lobbies, every nook and corner was packed with struggling humanity

"Our achievements during the last twelve months can now be summed up ,

1 We have been able to mobilise men, money and materials in accordance with the programme of "Total Mobilisation "

2 We have trained our Army for a modern war and have expanded it considerably

3. We have organised a women's section in our Army called the Rani of Jhansi Regiment

4 We have set up our own Government, the Arzi Hukumat-e-Azad Hind, and have obtained recognition from nine friendly Powers

5 We have acquired our first Free Territory in the Andamans and Nicobar Islands

6. We pushed forward our Headquarters to Burma, and in

February 1944 we launched our War of Independence On the 21st March we were able to proclaim to the world that our troops were already in India

7. We have considerably expanded the work of our Press-Propaganda-Publicity Department

8 We have set up a new organisation called the Azad Hind Dal, to take over the task of administration and reconstruction in Free India

9 We have set up a Bank of our own in Burma—the National Bank of Azad Hind Ltd. We have placed orders for our own currency to circulate in Free India.

10 We have been able to give a good account of ourselves in every sector of the fighting front and our troops have been pushing on inside India, slowly but steadily, in spite of all difficulties and hardships.

"There was a time when people had some doubt as to whether the Indian National Army would go into action, and whether, if it went into action, it would really defeat the enemy troops That test we have passed, and naturally it has given us unbounded confidence in ourselves ... ..

Since the fighting began on the soil of India, this war has become our own war, and the feeling that the war has become our own war has brought a new inspiration not only to our troops who are actually fighting, but also to those who are behind the lines

"Until now, I have not received any complaint from our troops regarding the hardships that they are suffering There has been only one complaint from the men and that is when there has been delay in sending them forward For example, I recently visited an hospital where there were men who have either been wounded, or striken with malaria or some other disease All these troops expressed their desire to be sent back to the front as soon as they were well These are men who fought at the front and they know the conditions there, and yet they were absolutely cheerful and optimistic Without indulging in any exaggeration I can say that this feeling of unbounded optimism

prevails among all Indians in East Asia . . . ,

"There is still another reason which strengthens our optimism, and that is the situation inside India. As you are well aware, so far there has been no compromise between the Congress Party on the one side and the British Government on the other. When Mahatma Gandhi was suddenly released some time ago, many people were speculating as to whether the release was purely on grounds of ill-health or it was a prelude to a compromise Now it is quite clear that the sudden release of Mahatma Gandhi was ordered purely on medical grounds and that there is no political motive involved As long as there is no compromise between Mahatma Gandhi and the British Government, we have no reason to feel anxious. . . Our task will be made much easier if there is no compromise inside India between the Congress and the British Government So far there is absolutely no sign of compromise, and what is exceedingly encouraging to us is that the statements Mahatma Gandhi has made uptil now all point in one direction, and that is that he sees no reason to alter the attitude he took up about two years ago when he sponsored the "Quit India" resolution . . . . .

"Therefore, I come to the conclusion that the situation inside India remains exceedingly favourable to us. One can easily understand that so long as the Congress does not compromise and does not surrender to the British Government, the general attitude of the people will remain anti-British As our operations advance, people will soon realise that there is no other way of achieving freedom than fighting for it, and they will decide to participate in the war and to give us all assistance to conduct our war"

People had listened to the speech of Netaji spell-bound It took nearly an hour and a half for the crowd to disperse after the meeting was over. Such enthusiasm !

July 5, 1944.

Today was the second day of the Netaji Week The Fauj soldiers in Rangoon held a parade with Subhas Babu taking the salute It was an imposing spectacle. The turn-out of our Regiment was

perfect, and Subhas Babu paid us a high compliment

Netaji spoke to the Fauj soldiers :

"The formation of the Azad Hind Fauj has been a source of extreme worry and anxiety to our enemies They tried to ignore its existence for a time, but when the news could no longer be suppressed, their organ—the anti-India Radio at Delhi—started propaganda to the effect that Indian prisoners-of-war, under Japanese control, had been coerced into joining the army. This propaganda could not, however, endure long, because the news began to infiltrate into India that large number of Indian civilians from all parts of East Asia were joining the Azad Hind Fauj The experts of the anti-India Radio had therefore to alter their tactics. They then started fresh propaganda to the effect that Indian prisoners-of-war had refused to join the Azad Hind Fauj and that, thereupon, Indian civilians were being forced in to joining that army It did not probably strike the wise-acres at Delhi that if it was impossible to coerce prisoners-of-war in to joining the army, it was even more impossible to coerce free civilians into becoming soldiers .

"Anybody who has a grain of common sense will realize that though a mercenary army can be organized by coercion, a Volunteer Army can never be so organized You can perhaps force a man to shoulder rifle, but you can never fight him to give his life for a cause which is not his own

"At an early stage our enemies used to say that the Azad Hind Fauj was no army—that it was a mere propaganda stunt—and that it would never fight Later on, the anti-India Radio at Delhi began to shout that the Azad Hind Fauj had not crossed the frontier of India. Now that frontier has been crossed and the battle for India's freedom is being waged on Indian soul, enemy propagandists have taken recourse to a last desperate trick They are now inventing fictitious dates supposed to have been given out by us for our entry into Delhi and are abusing us for not reaching our destination according to schedule

"I have already told you that the Azad Hind Fauj is composed

both of ex-Army men as well as of ex-civilians I may inform you further that it is composed not only of men but also of women

"Friends, the Azad Hind Fauj is an army which is not only composed of Indians, but it has also been trained by Indians. That army is to-day fighting under Indian Officers.

"The Azad Hind Fauj is the military organ of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind The Provisional Government and its Army are the servants of the Indian nation. Their task is to fight and liberate India When that liberation is acheived, it will be for the Indian people to determine the form of Government that they desire. The Provincial Government will then make for a permanent Government in Free India, which will be set up in accordance with the will of the Indian people. For that glorious day we are now toiling sweating and fighting."

Shouts of Jai-Hind rose from thousands of throats, the soldiers lifted their rifles and placed them high on their shoulders and gave resounding slogans of Chalo-Dilli and Jai-Hind

Then Netaji referred to the brave exploits of our heroes in the Arakan fight, and decorated M—with the medal "Sardar-e-Jang" for efficient leadership of the Fauj on the Arakan front He also decorated Lieut P—with "Vir-e-Hind" for high standard of patriotism, courage and devotion to duty on 5th February

July 6, 1944

Netaji addressed Gandhiji on the radio to-day.

He spoke as if he would speak to his father, straight from the heart, without hiding a word of his joys and sorrows, without hushing a single discordant note.

"Mahatmaji,

"After the sad demise of Srimati Kasturba in British custody it was but natural for your countrymen to be alarmed over the state of your health For Indians outside India, differences in method are like domestic differences Ever since you sponsored the Independence Resolution at the Lahore Congress in December 1929, all members of the Indian National Congress have had one common goal

before them For Indians outside India, you are the creator of the present awakening in your country The high esteem in which you are held by patriotic Indians outside India and by foreign friends of India's freedom, was increased a hundred-fold when you bravely sponsored the "Quit India" Resolution in August 1942 .

"It would be a fatal mistake on our part to make a distinction between the British Government and the British people No doubt there is a small group of idealists in Britain—as in the U S A.—who would like to see India free These idealists, who are treated by their own people as cranks, form a microscopic minority. So far as India is concerned, for all practical purposes, the British Government and the British people mean one and the same thing. Regarding the war aims of the U S A , I may say that the ruling clique at Washington is now dreaming of world domination This ruling clique and its intellectual exponents, talk openly of the 'American Century' In this ruling clique, there are extremists who go so far as to call Britain the 49th State of the U S A .

"I can assure you, Mahatmaji, that before I finally decided to set out on this hazardous mission, I spent days, weeks and months in carefully considering the pros and cons of the case After having served my people so long, to the best of my ability, I could have no desire to be a traitor, or to give anyone a justification for calling me a traitor Thanks to the generosity and to the affection of my countrymen, I had obtained the highest honour which it was possible for any public worker in India to achieve. I had also built up a party consisting of staunch and loyal colleagues who had implicit confidence in me By going abroad on a perilous quest, I was risking not only my life and my whole future career, but what was more, the future of my party. If I had the slightest hope that without action from abroad we could win freedom, I would never have left India during a crisis If I had any hope that within our lifetime we could get another chance—another golden opportunity—for winning freedom, as during the present war, I doubt if I would have set out from home .

"There remains but one question for me to answer with regard to the Axis powers Can it be possible that I have been deceived by them? I believe it will be universally admitted that the cleverest and the most cunning politicians are to be found amongst Britishers One who has worked with and fought British politicians all his life, cannot be deceived by any other politicians in the world. If British politicians have failed to coax or coerce me, no other politician can suceeed in doing so And if the British Government, at whose hands I have suffered long imprisonment, persecution and physical assault, has been unable to demoralize me, no other power can hope to do so I have never done anything which could compromise in the least, either the honour or the self respect or the interests of my country.

"There was a time when Japan was an ally of our enemy I did not come to Japan, so long as there was an Anglo-Japanese Alliance I did not come to Japan, so long as normal diplomatic relations obtained between the two countries It was only after Japan took what I considered to be the most momentous step in her history, declaration of war on Britain and America, that I decided to visit Japan of my own free will Like so many of my countrymen, my sympathies in 1937 and 1938 were with Chungking You may remember that as President of the Congress, I was responsible for sending out a medical mission to Chungking in December 1938

"Mahatmaji, you know better than anybody else how deeply suspicious the Indian people are of mere promises I would be the last man to be influenced by Japan if her declarations of policy had been mere promises

"Mahatmaji, I should now like to say something about the Provisional Government that we have set up here The Provisional Government has, as its one objective, the liberation of India from British yoke, through an armed struggle Once our enemies are expelled from India, and peace and order is established, the mission of the Provisional Government will be over The only reward that we desire for our efforts, for our suffering and for our sacrifice is the free-

dom of our Motherland There are many among us who would like to retire from the political field, once India is free .

"Nobody would be more happy than ourselves, if by any chance our countrymen at home should succeed in liberating themselves through their own efforts, or if by any chance, the British Government accepts your 'Quit India' resolution and gives effect to it We are, however, proceeding on the assumption that neither of the above is possible and that an armed struggle is inevitable India's last war of independence has begun. Troops of the Azad Hind Fauj are now fighting bravely on the soil of India and inspite of all difficulty and hardship, they are pushing forward slowly but steadily This armed struggle will go on, until the last Britisher is thrown out of India and until our Tri-Colour National Flag proudly floats over the Viceroy's house in New Delhi

"Father of our nation ! In this holy war for India's liberation, we ask for your blessings and good wishes "

July 9, 1944

Today, in front of thousands of spectators, Netaji announced the great sacrifice of Sri H—, a Muslim multi-millionaire He has presented his jewellery, estates and properties worth about a crore of rupees to the I. I L for the freedom struggle Netaji awarded him the medal of Sevak-i-Hind He is the first to receive it

Reports from India are very promising But our Staff Officers are expecting a long and hard struggle before the British quit India The British are bound to fight desperately in their last effort to save the empire Minus India, Britain would become a third-rate power. They know it

Subhas Babu talks in inspired language when he talks about Victory. His faith is really very deep I tremble at the thought , If something were to go wrong with our plans, would he be broken— too sorely affected ? He has put all his eggs in this one basket. Azadi All of us in East Asia are doing it God will protect us.

July 10, 1944.

Subhas Babu delivered a thundering oration at the public rally.

The audience was nearly thirty thousand He outlined the strategy of our Movement in the following terms .

"We know that so long as the British Army in India is not attacked from outside, it will be able to suppress the revolutionary movement in the country The Azad Hind Fauj has, therefore, set up the 'Second Front' in India's war of emancipation When we advance further into India and the people see with own eyes, the British forces falling back, they will get the confidence that Britain's downfall is at hand Then only will they risk their necks and come and join hands with our advancing forces to liberate the country. Together we shall then pursue the British and expel them from the soil of India . . . .

"Friends ! Only a fool would minimise the strength of the enemy We have seen hetrogenous armies of our enemies in the Arakans, in the Kaladan and Haka sectors, in the Tiddim area and in Manipur and Assam. As we anticipated long ago, their rations and equipment are superior to ours, because they have been looting India in order to fight us We have, nevertheless, beaten them everywhere Revolutionary armies everywhere in the world have to fight under conditions similar to ours but they, nevertheless, triumph at the end Their strength does not come from beer and rum, tinned-pork and bully-beef—but from faith and sacrifice, heroism and fortitude The Azad Hind Fauj—unlike the British Army in India—has been trained to fight under conditions of extreme difficulty and hardship, and it will never let down the 388 millions of Indians for whose liberation it is now fighting .

NETAJI'S VISIT TO FRONT LINE TROOPS.

On the 18th February, 1945, Netaji arrived at Pyinmana to inspect the troops of the No 1 Division at Pyinmana, and the No. 2 Division at Kyauk Padang and Popa At this time most of the officers and men of the No 1 Division were physically unfit and only about 20% had any arms at all It was quite clear that for some considerable period this division would not be fit to take part in any operations

Netaji told me that the No. 2 Division had started moving to the front early in February and that unfortunately the Divisional Commander Col Aziz Ahmad, at the last minute, had been injured in a bombing raid He, therefore, ordered me to proceed to Popa and take over command of the No 2 Division

Having bid farewell to my troops, with whom I had been throughout Imphal operations and of whom I was very proud, I left Pyinmana, with Netaji and his personal staff to proceed to Meiktila and later to Popa On the morning of the 20th February, our party arrived in an Indian village named "Indo" approximately 20 miles south of Meiktila and halted there for the day During the day enemy aircraft were so active that it was almost impossible for any car to move on the road, and even at night, lorries and cars had to move without lights for fear of being spotted and shot up by planes

While resting in this village, we received information that the enemy had broken through the front held by the No 4 (Nehru Brigade) Regiment at Nyangu and Pagan in the vicinity of Pakokou We were informed that our units had suffered very heavy casualties and that the enemy was advancing on Meiktila

Netaji decided to proceed to Meiktila at once and to try and

close up the gap created by the advancing British forces The party arrived in Meiktila on the evening of the 20th February, 1945. This party consisted of Netaji's personal staff, including one Japanese Major acting as the interpreter, and 20 armed soldiers acting as his personal body guards

At the time the situation on the front was very confused indeed. Heavy fighting was going on at Kyaukse Mandalay had been occupied The British forces, with the full weight of their armour were pushing down south along the main Mandalay-Meiktila Rangoon road The Japanese forces fighting around Mandalay had been caught in the plains by British tanks and aeroplanes and they had been moved down mercilessly Those that had survived retreated towards Maymayo and into the Shan States to take shelter in the mountains On the west of Meiktila the British forces had crossed the Irrawaddy at several places and heavy fighting was going on at Myinsyam, Pakokou, Nyaungu and Pagan The enemy was attempting a thrust towards Meiktila, which was the nerve centre of the Japanese rail and road communications, and once Meiktila was captured the entire Japanese force in Burma would be paralysed. It was therefore, considered most inadvisable for Netaji to stay in Meiktila, especially because it had no proper defences and practically no troops to defend it

All of us requested Netaji to leave Meiktila and to give up his idea of proceeding to Popa where fighting was in progress He refused to listen to us, but eventually I managed to get him to agree to allow me to proceed to Popa first, study the military situation and then come back and report to him and take him with me to Popa In the meantime Netaji was to proceed to Kalaw and inspect an I N A hospital there

Major Mahboob Ahmad, the military Secretary to Netaji and I left Meiktila on the night of the 21/22nd February We started at about midnight. Netaji came to see us off and gave us full instructions on the plan and course we were to follow in the fighting. At that critical hour when it was absolutely clear even to a lay man

that the fight for Burma was over and that the defeat of the Axis-powers was only a matter of days ; Netaji was supremely confident of our victory He said, "Even if the Axis powers lay down their arms, we must continue our struggle. There is no end to our struggle until the last British quits the shores of our country" He was of the opinion that the British should not be allowed to advance or break through our front, even if all the I N A. soldiers were killed What he wanted most was that the I.N A "shaheeds" should leave behind such a legend and tradition of heroism that future generations of Indians would be proud of them After assuring him that his wishes would be carried out and that as long as one soldier of the I. N. A. was alive the British would not advance on our front, we left for Popa We arrived at Kyaukpadang at 0500 hours on the 22nd February, 1945, and met Col Dhillon, the commander of the No 4 Regiment, and after issuing full instructions to him, proceeded to Popa to inspect the Divisional Headquarters and the No. 2 Infantry Regiment, under the command of Col. P K Sahgal I took over the command of the Division and issued orders to the Brigade commanders, allotting them different tasks, full details of which were to follow later.

On the 25th February, Mahboob Ahmad and I returned to Meiktila and reported the situation on the Popa front to Netaji I explained to him that owing to the confused state of fighting it was not proper for Netaji to proceed any further, as it was too dangerous This discussion took place in an open field on a bright moonlit night, well after midnight We could see the flashes of heavy gunfire and of machine guns The situation was extremely critical British tanks might break through any minute and capture Meiktila, with Netaji there Major Rawat, Col Mahboob and I pleaded with Netaji to make him give up his idea of proceeding to Popa Just at that moment, a Japanese officer arrived and informed us that powerful British tank and armoured columns had broken through and occupid Pyinbin and were advancing on Taungtha, approximately 40 miles to the north west of Meiktila He also appealed to Netaji to

leave Meiktila, that very night and go further south to Pyinmana, where there were troops of the No. 1 Division to put up a fight in case the enemy advanced He further informed Netaji that there were no troops at all between Taungtha and Meiktila. I told Netaji that a distance of 40 miles was nothing for an armoured column, and that it could be covered in two hours at the most and we had no troops to hold them up Twenty men who formed Netaji's personal guard were armed only with rifles and could not put up any resistence to an armoured Brigade. I strongly appealed to Netaji to leave Meiktila, but he would not listen to any thing I lost patience and said to him, "Netaji, you are being very selfish Just to show your personal bravery you are risking your life, but you have no right to risk your life in this way Your own life does not belong to you, it is a precious trust of India, which is in our keeping, and I am going to make sure that precious trust of India is not endangered in this way" I pleaded, "Netaji, just think what would happen to the I N.A. and the Indian Independence Movement, should any thing happen to you"

He listened to me very calmly, because he knew that all that I said came from the very depths of my heart, and was prompted by my extreme anxiety for his safety. He just smiled and said, "Shahnawaz it is no use pleading with me I have made up my mind to go to Popa and I am going there You do not have to worry about my safety, as I know England has not yet produced the bomb that can kill Subhas Chandra Bose" This last statement appeared particularly true, as Netaji semed to lead a charmed life That afternoon, the place he was living in was heavily bombed by sixty B-25S They caused terrible devastation all round, and it was difficult to imagine how Netaji escaped without even a scratch.

All of us had failed to pursuade Netaji not to proceed any further, but once he had made up this mind, no one could make him change it Yet, all of us were convinced that it was the most dangerous thing for him to go to Popa We were in a terrible fix At last Major Rawat, Netaji's adjutant, thought of a plan It was nearly 2 a m , if

we could delay Netaji's departure from Meiktila by about 2 hours, it would be daylight and his departure, at any rate, for that day would be delayed. Consequently, Rawat started his delaying tactics. Netaji was in a hurry to start, but Rawat, who was ordered to type out a very important letter took a long time over it He then hinted to Netaji's driver to invent some engine trouble in his car That night we received urgent telegrams from Gen Kiani and the Commander-in-Chief of the Japanase forces requesting Netaji to return to Rangoon immediately. Netaji was becoming very impatient and was losing his temper with everyone, but Rawat and the driver pretended that they were doing their best to start as early as possible Eventually it was 5 o'clock, and I know that we had delayed his visit for another day, and had given us more time to study the military situation At 05-30 a.m. we managed to pursuade Netaji to lie down and have a little sleep in a small grass hut in the nearby village, and the Japanese Liaison Officer Major Takashi, went off to obtain the latest information about the movements of enemy forces He returned at 08-00 a m. and reported that an enemy mechanised brigade had arrived at Mahlaing—10 miles north of Meiktila—and that it had cut off the road from Meiktila to Mandalay and from Meiktila to Kyaukpadang. He told us that the enemy was preparing to advance and that there being no covering troops between Meiktila and Mahlaing the enemy was expected to occupy Meiktila any minute He said that we were too late already and that our line of retreat—the Meiktila-Rangoon road—had probably been cut off We were in a dilemma There were two courses open to us (i) to stay on where we were and die fighting because our force was so small that there was no earthly chance for us to hold up the enemy's advance, and (ii) To make an attempt to escape from Meiktila despite the fact that the main road had been cut off by the enemy Netaji's idea was that we should make an attempt to break through, and even if the enemy had established a road block across our line of retreat, it was better for us to get killed there It was indeed a brave decision, because quite apart from the possibility of an enemy road block, it was almost suicidal to travel on that road during the hours of daylight.

There was practically no cover from air-attack on that road and there were numerous enemy planes always patrolling overhead. Anyhow, Netaji had taken the decision and we had to abide by it.

Within ten minutes we were ready to start. There was only one car available for immediate use then, and only 4 people could go in it. I left the choice of those 4 men entirely to Netaji For me it was difficult to decide what I should do On one side were my troops fighting valiantly at Popa and Kyaukpadang against heavy odds who were expecting me there, and inspite of the fact that the road was blockaded by the enemy I had a strong desire to go round the road block and reach my troops at Popa. On the other hand, was my personal loyalty and duty to my leader. His life was in great danger. How could I leave him at that moment? I could not choose between these two conflicting duties and I left the decision to Netaji. Netaji decided that his Japanese Liaison officer and his personal Medical Officer Colonel Raju should accompany him leaving a place for only one more person Netaji said that we might have to fight our way through. It was, therefore, essential that the person who accompanied him should be such that would be able to fight his way through. Eventually Netaji turned round to me and said, "You must come with me." I bowed before his decision and filled up the car with grenades and ammunition, fully realizing that the chances of escape were very slender indeed But we were all prepared for it None of us spoke, but we knew exactly what the others were thinking. Everyone looked cheerful One thing was certain, the enemy would never capture us alive When we entered the car and started off Netaji was sitting with a loaded Tommy gun in his lap Raju had two hand grenades ready The Japanese officer was holding on to another tommy gun and I had a loaded Bren gun in my hand. We were all ready to open fire instantaneously. The Japanese officer stood on the foot board of the car to be on the lookout for enemy aircraft. Raju sat next to the driver to locate any road blocks put up by the enemy, while Netaji and I sat at the back watching both sides of the road.

Our first objective was a small Indian village called "Indo", ap-

proximately 20 miles south of Meiktila We were on the road for about 40 minutes but by some miracle not a single enemy plane turned up, neither did we encounter any road block. We arrived safely at "Indo" and decided to spend the rest of the day there No sooner had we entered the village than British fighter planes arrived and started machine gunning the village. We had escaped almost certain death by about 5 minutes It is not possible for those persons who have not actually been subjected to aerial bombardment or machine-gunning, to imagine what a terrible thing it is to be caught in the open by enemy fighter planes. Some of them had as many as 12 machine guns in them. Neither did they have any scruples regarding the use of 22 and 40 m m armour piercing cartridges on our soldiers. These cartridges are approximately 10 inches long and are used to destroy railway engine and heavy tanks, and when used against human beings make a terrible mess of the human body

At this time Indo village, as also the rest of the area in the neighbourhood of Meiktila was infested with enemy spies and agents I, therefore, requested Netaji to leave the village and come out into the jungle We first took shelter in a cactus hedge near the village, but we were soon spotted and one very suspicious looking person came to our resting place, and after throughly studying the place, went away I told Netaji that I suspected that the man was a British spy and that it was necessary to change our position Netaji agreed and I took him away into a thick jungle approximately a mile away from the village No sooner had we arrived at our new position then two British planes arrived and started circling very low over the very cactus hedge where Netaji had taken shelter I pointed out those planes to Netaji and jokingly said to him, "Netaji, they are looking for you" The Burmese who had seen us in the hedge was after all a British spy We spent that day in the jungle We were feeling quite hungry and so I went and brought some grams from a field nearby, and Netaji lived on it for the day

That day we were visited by numerous enemy air-craft, but luckily none spotted us As a precaution against enemy artillery shel-

ling and against air attack, I had a small trench dug for Netaji On one occasion some enemy planes arrived and started circling very low at tree-top height above the bushes where we were taking shelter, and it appeared as if they had either spotted us or had been warned of our presence by British spies Both of us took shelter in that trench when all of a sudden I saw a huge black scorpion crawling about on the side of the trench hardly an inch from Netaji's neck Netaji also saw it, but we dare not move for fear of giving away our position to ememy aircraft After a minute or so the planes went away to search another patch of bushes. We had not been spotted. We then killed this scorpion.

In the evening, as soon as the sun went down, Netaji sent for me and told me that he intended to go back to Meiktila again As there were still some I N A soldiers left there he did not like to go back without making proper arrangements for their evacuation Eventually, he agreed to proceed to Pyinmana, while I returned to Meiktila I reached Meiktila at obout 10 p m. on the 26th February and found heavy fighting going on in the town There was a large Japanese hospital in Meiktila containing approximately 1,000 bed-ridden patients The enemy advance was so rapid that the Japanese had no time to evacuate them. They, therefore, detailed an officer with a guard to shoot all those who could not walk. This order was carried out.

Having evacuated all I N A. stores and personnel in Meiktila I returned to Pyinmana, where I found Netaji waiting for me I met him on the 1st March, 1945, and found that he had prepared a plan of operation in case the enemy reached Pyinmana At that time it looked very probable that the enemy would push down rapidly from Meiktila towards Pyinmana and Toungoo. Netaji's plan was to form one Brigade known as the "X" Regiment out of the remnants of the No 1 Division, and with this force he intended to occupy a defensive position a few miles north of Pyinmana He told me that he had decided to stop at Pyinmana and fight his last battle against the British there For the remaining sick soldiers he issued orders that they should

be evacuated to another camp 10 miles to the rear and if the British broke through the defence of the "X" Regiment they were to surrender themselves. For the "X" Regiment his orders were that they must fight to the last man.

Colonel Thakur Singh, a very daring commander who had been my second-in-command during Manipore operations, was selected to command the "X" Regiment Colonel R M Arshad was put in command of the remaining personnel of the No 1 Division. Netaji called a conference of all senior officers and started issuing his orders When he had finished I assured him that his wishes would be carried out, but it was not necessary for him to stay behind at Pyinmana and make it his last battle. All of us requested him to return to Rangoon, and from there exercise control and command over all the I. N A. troops including the No 1, No 2 and No 3 Divisions. We also assured Netaji that the enemy would probably first consolidate his gains in Meiktila and then advance, which would probably take him a fortnight. Netaji having studied the situation agreed and ordered me to proceed to Rangoon and then to Popa via Prome-Yennangyaun-Kyaukpadang This route was still open and it was possible for me, having safely brought back Netaji to Rangoon, to rejoin my Division

When we arrived in Rangoon, we received information that four senior staff officers of the No 2 Divisional Headquarters had deserted to the British from Popa. This upset Netaji very much He called me at midnight and told me how much ashamed he was of the action of those staff officers He explained that he realized that owing to the turn of the tide of battle and due to British victories some officers had become demoralized He gave me a free hand in the selection of all my staff officers, and in turn I gave him an assurance that in future there would be no more desertions among the troops I looked round and selected the best available set of staff officers They were Major Ram Sarup, Major Mehar Das, Major Ajaib Singh and Major B S. Rawat We left Rangoon on the evening of the 7th March, 1945 Before we left I took all the staff officers to pay our respects to Netaji We had dinner with him, and after dinner Netaji

talked to us He said, "I know we have lost the battle of Burma, but that should not dishearten us in any way. We have to continue fighting to uphold the honour of India All of you have been given the proud privilege of being called upon to take charge of fighting at a most critical hour in the history of the I. N. A. ... The honour of the I N A. is now in your hands, and I am sure you will prove worthy of the trust that has been placed in you" When we bid farewell to him on the steps of his porch, there were tears in his eyes. Perhaps he realized that we were going on a very hazardous mission and that we would probably not meet again.

On behalf of all my staff officers, I asked Netaji to have full confidence in us, and assured him that we would uphold the honour of India under all circumstances We arrived at Popa on the 12th. March, 1945.

Formation and activities of the No. 2 Division

The No 2 Division was raised at Singapore in December, 1943 and Col N S. Bhagat was appointed its commander. Originally it consisted of the old field force, i.e.

No. 1 Infantry Regiment.

Heavy gun Battalion.

Armoured Fighting Vehicles Battalion.

Div. Signals.

Div. Engineers.

The units of the No. 2 Division were armed with much heavier weapons than the No. 1 Division, which was intended mainly for Guerilla operations. The No 2 Division was meant for taking part in field operations. Their Infantry units had 3" mortars, anti-tank guns and rifles and heavy machine guns.

The original idea was that for the fighting in the mountainous areas around Imphal Guerilla operations were necessary, and as soon as Imphal was captured and the fighting entered the plains of India, the No 2 Division, with its heavier weapons would be brought up.

In, April 1944 the Division was moved to Ipoh, and a new Regiment, known as the No. 5 Guerilla Brigade was raised and allotted to the No 2 Division This regiment was under command of Colonel Rodérigues After a short but intensive period of training, units of this Division started moving to the front The Divisional Headquarters moved from Ipoh in July, 1944, and arrived in Rangoon early in November, 1944 Before the move of the Divisional Headquarters from Ipoh, it was found necessary by Netaji, for certain internal difficulties, to change the commander of the No. 2 Division, and Col Aziz Ahmad who was commanding the Nehru Brigade in Burma was recalled to Malaya and appointed its commander.

Concentration of the Division at Rangoon

In May, 1944, the No 1 Infantry Regiment under the command of Lt Colonel S M Hussain, left Jitra for Burma. It used the same route as the units of the No 1 Division. By this time, enemy airforces and submarines had become very active They were continuously bombing railways, bridges and troop concentrations on the route in order to stop reinforcements reaching the front line. The sea journey from Kwashi (Victoria point) to Mergui had become particularly dangerous It was constantly being watched by enemy bombers and submarines and a ship carrying all the heavy armament, including mortars, anti-tank guns and machine guns of the No 1 Infantry regiment was torpedoed and sunk, with the result that when the No 1 Infantry Regiment arrived in Rangoon it had only rifles and a few light machine guns with it It was consequently rendered absolutely unfit to proceed any further without being re-equipped.

Our troops had to cover this journey from Thailand to Rangoon, mostly on foot, with the result that it took the No. 1 Regiment almost four months to reach Rangoon

The Divisional Headquarters and the No. 5 Guerilla Regiment left Ipoh in July, 1944 By the end of December, 1944, the troops of the No 2 Division had concentrated in Rangoon. At about the same time the No 4 Guerilla Regiment (Nehru Brigade), which had previously been a part of the No. 1 Division, was trans-

ferred to the No. 2 Division. This Brigade, under the command of Col Aziz Ahmad had arrived in Mandalay in May, 1944, and on the transfer of Col. Aziz Ahmad to Malaya, Colonel Arshad was appointed its commander. Later, Major A K Rana, was appointed its commander, who in turn was replaced by Major Mahboob Ahmad. This Brigade did excellent service during the evacuation of the No. 1 Division from Kalewa to Mandalay.

Operational activities of the No. 2 Division No. 4 Guerilla Regiment (*Nehru Brigade*)

Early in October, 1944, the Nehru Brigade under command of Major Mahboob Ahmad, was transferred to Myingyan in the Irrawaddy There it was ordered to prepare defence works to prevent the British forces, crossing the Irrawaddy on that front. A few days later Major G. S Dhillon took over the command of the unit from Major Mahboob Ahmad, who was appointed Military Secretary to Netaji in Rangoon.

This unit was very much under strength and was very poorly equipped It was armed only with rifles, light automatics, mainly Lewis guns and a few Bren guns This unit had a large number of Tamil soldiers who had been recruited and trained in Malaya Work was started and good progress made at Myingyan despite constant attacks by British aircraft In December, 1944, our units suffered heavy casualties through enemy bombing.

Late in January, 1945, Major Dhillon received the following information regarding the movements of the enemy (a) That one British Division had crossed the Irrawaddy in the vicinity of Malaya (b) That the 2nd British Division had arrived at Saigon and bridgeheads had been established at Minbu and other places in the vicinity, and (c) That, one Division having advanced from Kalemyo, down the Gangaw valley, was advancing along the Kan—Gangaw—Tilin—Pauk road, and was in the vicinity of Pakokou, feeling for likely places to establish bridgeheads across the Irrawaddy in the vicinity of Nyaungu and Pagan.

On the 29th January, Major Dhillon received the following order —

"No. 4 Guerilla Regiment will move immediately to Myangu and Pagan and prevent the enemy crossing the Irrawaddy at those places. Covering troops will also be sent to Pakokou to patrol Pakokou— Tilin Road The unit should be in position by the 20th January".

As will be seen from this order, Major Dhillon's unit was supposed to prepare their defensive position by the 20th January, whereas actually received the copy of order on the 29th January. This was due to the extremely bad system of inter-communications. Inspite of his failing health, however, Major Dhillon at once took this task in hand. He had no mechanical transport of any sort and he was dependent for the move of the whole Brigade in bullock carts, hired from the Burmese and the distance to be covered was over 80 miles He left Myingyan during the first week of February with advance parties of his Battalion On the way he heard that the British had already crossed the Irrawaddy, but despite this he pushed on, and on arrival there he found that although enemy patrols had reached Pakokou, they had not crossed the Irrawaddy, yet. Major Dhillon carried out a thorough reconnaissance of the area and allotted it to battalions He allotted the area of Nyangu to the No 7 Battalion commanded by Lt Hari Ram The area of Pagan was allotted to the No 9 Battalion, commanded by Lt Chandra Bhan, and the No 8 Battalion was kept in reserve in a village a few miles in the rear

Fighting patrols were pushed across the Irrawaddy to keep contact with the enemy in the area of Pakokou In the meantime, the main body of the Brigade, which was being brought up by Major Jagir Singh began to arrive in their respective areas on the evening of the 8th February, 1945, and digging was commenced. Our troops had hardly been in position for a day when the enemy became active. Our patrols across the river were forced back and on the night of the 9 10th February, a British patrol crossed the Irrawaddy into our area

They were all either killed or captured.

In the meantime a whole British Division, probably the 7th Indian Division, had arrived on the opposite bank of the river, and lined up their heavy artillery in full view of our men. Our men were *armed only with rifles, light automatics and a few medium machine* guns.

On the morning of the 10th February, the enemy started shelling our positions heavily. At night they attempted a crossing on a wide front, but were beaten back with heavy losses, and for the next three days they made several attempts to cross, but everywhere our men held them and all their attempts were foiled.

On the night of the 13/14th February, the enemy having considerably reinforced their artillery started a most determined attack. They subjected our defensive positions to a most intensive artillery barrage, and under cover of it they tried to cross over in motor boats. A terrible battle raged throughout the night, and attack after attack by the British was beaten back. Fighting was particularly heavy on the Pagan front, where Capt. Chander Bhan had sited his machine guns in an excellent position He allowed the enemy to come near his bank and then opened up with every available weapon. His opponents were British "tommies" of the East Lancashire Regiment His men fought with a vengeance At least 20 boatful of enemy soldiers were sunk. The rest turned round and raced for safety to the opposite bank. Later on it was reliably learnt that the Commanding Officer, after his boat was sunk, had to swim back to his lines, leaving his trousers in the Irrawaddy.

On the morning of the 14th February, as soon as it was daylight, enemy aeroplanes started an intensive bombing and machine gunning of our positions. At the same time the enemy's artillery on the opposite bank opened up an intensive barrage. Our men did not have even a 2" mortar to retaliate. They had to wait patiently for the enemy to come within rifle range before they could open fire. At about midday a small Japanese outpost, which was on our right flank opposite Pakokou, was overpowered and the British forces secured a foothold

on the east bank of the Irrawaddy and formed a bridgehead through which they pushed across large numbers of men By this time due to continuous fighting, and the lack of spare parts, almost all our machine guns were out of action, and ammunition was almost completely exhausted.

The enemy, having landed on the Japanese front, turned south and encircled our 7th Battalion. They also dropped a large number of men by parachutes behind our lines Our men having used up all their ammunition resorted to bayonet charges, but eventually most of the men of the 7th Battalion were overpowered and had to surrender. But the Battalion in reserve and the 9th Battalion, under Chander Bhan, continued to hold firmly to their positions In the evening Major Dhillon intended to rally all his men and counter-attack the enemy to drive him across the river, but it was not possible to carry out the attack in daylight because of enemy planes and artillery.

The only means of inter-communication that Major Dhillon had with his Battalion Commander, was through the runners He did not even have a telephone to keep in touch with his unit It was, therefore, almost impossible to keep control over his units and every thing had to be left to the initiative of his unit commanders.

As soon as there was a lull in the aerial machine gunning and bombing, Major Dhillon himself went forward to contact his unit commanders to issue further instructions. By the evening of the 14th February, most of the enemy Division had crossed the Irrawaddy Major Dhillon ordered his troops to fall back on Popa and Kyauk Padang and take up defensive positions there Major Jagir Singh, the Regimental Second-in-Command to Major Dhillon rushed to Kyauk Padang and rallied all his men and made excellent arrangements, under very adverse conditions, for local collection of rations and ther supplies.

The next few days were spent by Major Dhillon in reorganising his unit. On the evening of the 21st February, 1945, I and Major Mahboob Ahmad were sent by Netaji from Meiktila to inspect the Nehru Brigade and the No.2 Infantry Regiment at Kyauk Padang

and Popa respectively.

On February 23rd a conference of Regimental commanders was held at Popa and orders were issued by me alloting following tasks with the ultimate object of driving the British forces across the Irrawaddy.

1. No. 2 Infantry Regiment under Col. P. K. Sahgal was to prepare Popa as a strong Base and prepare for an offensive role.

2. No. 4 Regiment was ordered to carry out Guerilla warfare against the enemy along the road Kyauk Padang-Nyangu in the vicinity of Taungzin.

No. 4. Guerilla Regiment inspite of the heavy losses suffered by them took up this new role with great enthusiasm. Intensive Guerilla activity was started and the advance of the enemy force on Kyauk Padang was checked on this route.

On Feb 27th a mechanized patrol of the enemy supported by tanks advanced on Kyauk Padang and reached Pozu where it encountered one of our patrols. Our men were armed only with rifles. They opened fire on enemy tanks knowing well that their rifles fire would have no effect on them To their great surprise they saw that on encountering the fire, enemy tanks turned round and went back.

By their constant and intensive activity our units forced the enemy outposts to withdraw and by early March they were only 8 miles from Nyaungu Bridge Road.

On 11th March, Major Dhillon attacked Taungzin, a locality which had for some time past been held by the enemy in force. But before our attack went home they had evacuated the place.

On March 16th Capt. Khan Mohd. was ordered to go and raid a hill near Sade village. This hill was well fortified by the enemy, estimated to be at least one Battalion. By a clever night march Khan Mohd. reached the river bed just below the hill he was to attack. The hill was steep and rocky; he there upon left all the weak and barefooted soldiers at the foot of the hill to keep open their line of retreat, after they had raided the hill. He had quite a number of soldiers who had no foot wear at all They carried out all their duties

inspite of it In fact the soldiers of the Azad Hind Fauj never allowed the shortage of clothes, medicines and food, to hamper their activities against the enemy. Khan Mohd's party crawled upto the hill as quietly as they could, but soon due to the noise of falling stones, their presence was detected and intensive firing from both sides commenced. Our men were not to be checked by this. They pushed on and got very close to the enemy post, who realizing that they were in grave peril of being annihilated put up an S. O S signal for reinforcements Capt. Khan Mohd's force then fixed bayonets and charged into the enemy position, and a grim hand to hand fight started In the meantime enemy reinforcement arrived They counter attacked Sade Hill with about 400 men and encircled Capt Khan Mohd's force attacking the post Our men were caught between two rings of the enemy. They turned round and fought back this counter attack in a most determined attack, shouting "Chalo Delhi" "Netaji ki Jai". Capt Khan Mohd's little force that had been left behind in the Nulla to keep open the line of retreat could not contain itself any longer and shouting "Bharat Mata ki Jai", "Netaji ki Jai" opened deadly barrage of fire on the enemy going up hill to counterattack Khan Mohd The enemy were present in large numbers and they were very crowded on the hill, and presented an easy target to our men They suffered terrible losses Our men in the Nulla having finished their ammunition then advanced with fixed bayonets and charged into the enemy The men who had been left behind because they had no boots, forgot all about the sharp splinters on the hill, and joined the rest in the attack. The fighting lasted from 0300 hours to 0500 hours when the remanants of the enemy escaped through our outer ring leaving Sade Hill in possession It had been one of the grimmest battles in which the I N.A soldiers had been engaged and they acquitted themselves creditably It was estimated and later confirmed from our Burmese informers that the enemy had suffered at least 200 killed in that action

Having completed his task of raiding Sade Hill, Khan Mohd. returned to his Head Quarters In that engagement we suffered 17 casualties This attack came as a very great shock to the enemy who

thought they had disposed off the I.N.A. in the battle of Nyangu and Pagan.

The area in which we were operating was flat, open, waterless desert, with a few bushes here and there. Our troops fighting in that area had to be supplied with rations and water from Kyauk Padang approximately 20 miles away and not having enough motor transport, water had to be supplied to troops by bullock carts.

At this time the main strategy of the enemy on this front was to hold powerful bridgeheads at Pagan, Nyaungu, Pakokou and Myin gyan and to push through powerful mechanized forces from Nyaungu via Pyinbin-Taungtha to Meiktila.

The Japanese forces in co-operation with the I.N A. were powerfully counter attacking this thrust on Meiktila from all directions with the object of forcing the enemy across the Irrawaddy once again

This new threat to their main base of Nyaungu by the I N A. caused a great deal of anxiety to the British commander, who decided to attack our toops in great force, on the day following Capt. Khan Mohd 's attack on Sade Hill.

Battle of Taungzin, 17th March, 1945.

On the 17th March one of our Battalions was holding a defensive position in the vicinity of Taungzin. A company commander by Lieut Kartar Singh was in the vicinity of village Nalaing "B" company was commanded by 2/Lt. Gian Singh Bisht and was located N.E. of Taungzin. "C" company was in Battalion reserve.

At about 1100 hours enemy artillery from North westerly direction started shelling our position very heavily At that time a patrol from "A" Company was out patrolling the area in front of our positions. This patrol was suddenly attacked by approximately one platoon of Gurkhas that had come up from Nyaungu direction in motor lorries.

Our patrol took up a defensive position and returned enemy's fire killing seven of them. The Battalion commander on receiving in-

formation of this engagement sent forward another fighting patrol under Lt Dittu Ram who contacted the first patrol and managed to hold up the enemy advance.

At about 12 30 hours fifteen enemy tanks, eleven armoured cars and ten trucks advanced by the main road and started intensive shelling and machine gunning of our forward posts Our men returned this fire with rifles and machine guns This enemy column then divided itself into two halves, one went in the direction of "A" company and the other towards "B" company which was holding a defensive position north East of Taungzin under the command of 2nd Lt. Gian Singh Bisht

The area which was held by this company was a flat stretch of land without any cover either from view or from fire. Near the position was a shallow dry pond near which three roads of great tactical importance met Four miles north west of this point was a hill 1423 ft height behind which the enemy artillery was located so as to cover the road junction and the area south of it. The occupation of which would have affected the entire plan of operations.

At a key point like this was placed "B" company of Gian Singh who was trained at the officer training school at Singapore. This company was only 98 strong. They had no machine guns or even light machine guns Rifles were their only weapons of defence or offence mines. His orders were to prevent the enemy from occupying that area at all costs.

He had been in that position for two days but the enemy had not dared to advance Then on 17th March 1945 starting early in the morning hostile fighter planes bombed and machine gunned their positions until 11 a m After this enemy's heavy artillery opened up heavy fire on his company position and under cover of this fire advanced a column of motorised infantry This column made its way straight towards the pond where the forward platoons of the company were in position Enemy armoured vehicles rained shells and bullets on our trenches Our men took cover and waited in their trenches for the infantry to disburse Tanks and armoured cars like steel monsters

creating hell with their fire power approached so close that they started charging on our trenches with the object of crushing our men Two mines were thrown in their way, but unluckily they failed to burst

There was no communication between this post and the battalion head quarters When 2nd Lt Gian Singh appreciated that their rifle fire was no match to enemy mortar machine-gun, hand grenades and light automatic fire and that their staying in trenches meant certain death or captivity with no loss to the enemy, he ordered his men to charge Leading the assault himself and shouting "Netaji ki Jai" "Inquilab Zindabad" "Azad Hindustan Zindabad," Lt Gian Singh led his men against the enemy infantry supported by steel monster All our men responded to his slogans which echoed above the enemy fire. Our men knew that they were charging into almost certain death but they had lost all fear of it There determination was the only support which these heroes had against the superior armament of the enemy In the name of India and Indian independence they charged into enemy trucks The enemy immediately debussed and fierce hand to hand fighting ensued which lasted for full two hours, but our heroes would not give in Forty of them sacrificed their lives after inflicting much heavier losses on the enemy The enemy was so impressed by their determination that they beat a hurried retreat

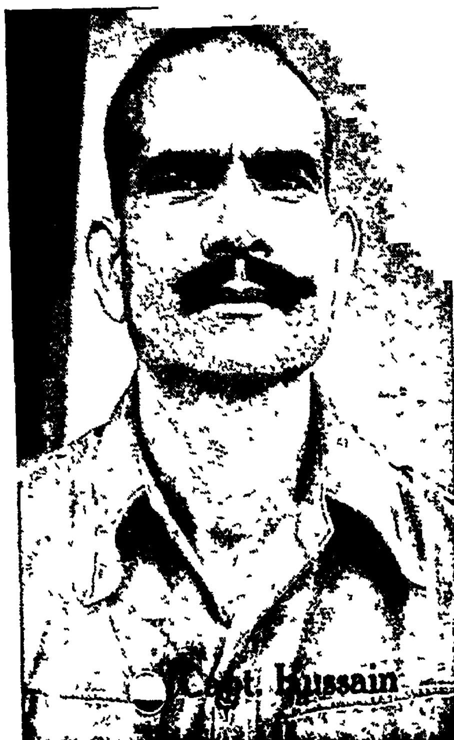
Just then Lt Gian Singh called forward his third platoon and was issuing orders when a bullet struck him in the head and he fell down never to rise again His assistant then took over the command of the company and re-organised

2nd Lt Gian Singh Bisht used to tell his men that he would die with them He fulfilled his promise and proved himself their true comrade both in life and death

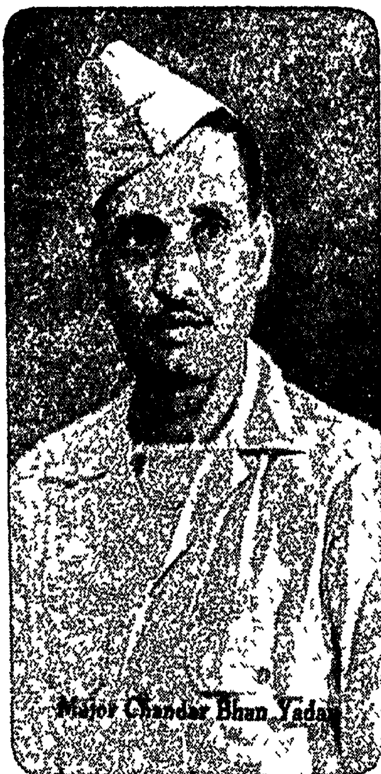
The enemy who had come towards "A" company started first by shelling the village and then his tanks, armoured cars and motorised infantry approached "A" company position The armoured fighting vehicles entered the village and opened fire Our company also returned the fire At about 1800 hours the enemy advanced with fixed bayonets deployed behind heavy tanks Our soldiers set the village



Commanded No. 3 Division in Malaya.



Commanded No. 2 Battalion of Nehru Brigade in operations around Kyauk-Daung—March 45


Major Chandar Bhan Yadav


Capt Hari Singh
Sher-i-Hind

on fire and made it a tank's obstacle. Left without the protection of their tanks, the enemy soldiers had no guts to advance any further. As darkness fell, they retreated having three men dead on the battle field and Taungzin which had been the scene of very bitter fighting throughout the day was still in our hands. On March 19th 1945, I visited Col. Dhillon at his Head Quarter at Khabok and met his Battalion Commanders Lt. Khan Mohd. and Capt Mohd. Hussain. Inspite of the fact that they had been in two attacks, our troops were in excellent spirits. After this for the next week, extensive patrol activity continued on both sides Generally speaking the enemy were most active during the day time because of the support they received from their aeroplanes and tanks Without this support they felt helpless and at night they remained behind barbed wire defences On the other hand our men who had to remain under cover during the day time due to intensive air activity were most active at night. It happened very often that some places in the battle area were in enemy hands during the day time and in ours at night On March 27th operation orders were issued to No 2 Division to attack Pyinbin on the night of 30/31 March

After successfully carrying out the role alloted to it No. 4 Regt. (Nehru Brigade) was ordered to return to Popa It arrived there on 5th April and the unit was given a new role to take over the defence on Meiktila-Kyauk Padang Road and at Popa. On April 8th information was received that the enemy having occupied Meiktila had advanced further and fighting was going on in the vicinity of Pyinmana. Another powerful British column had advanced from Meiktila on Kyaukpadang Road and then turned south to occupy Natmau and Taundwingy. Thus two divisions of the enemy had gone approximately 150—200 mile in rear of us The situation became very critical and the Japanese forces were ordered to retreat as best as they could to Moulmein No 2 Division received orders to move to Magwe-Minbu area where No 1 Infantry Regiment under Col. S M. Hussain was holding the area against enemy parachutists and guerilla

OPERATION ORDER.

Information —Unit No 599 has been allotted new role and its responsibility will be as under·—*(a)* Anti-Parachute work *(b)* Guarding the I O. C *(c)* Establishing law and order in areas where I.N A. troops are stationed. In connection with para (b) & (c) above, certain gangs of decoits are looting and harassing the civil population and the supply line of the I.N A. Our activities will mainly be against them.

2. *Intention* —Movement of formation of unit No. 599.—*(a)* Unit No. 603. In its present area of Magwe-Mainbu Unit No 606 on being relieved will rejoin Unit No. 603 at Magwe. *(b)*Unit No 747. In the area of Natmauk-Taungdwingyi (c) Unit No 801 In the area of Minhala to Sinbaungwe. (*d*) H Q Unit No 599 will move to a locality in Magwe area—Exact location will be intimated later.

3 *Method* —(*a*) Units will start moving independently from the evening of 10th April 1945 The move will be completed as soon as possible. All units will submit to these H Qrs a detailed programme of their move from this station (*b*) Routes (*i*) Marching columns of Unit No 599—Unit No 801, will use cart track running through the following villages — Kyauk Padaung—Ywala—Yezon—Okshitton Wetmasut—Magwe (*ii*) Unit No 747 will use cart tract —Kyauk Padaung—Kyatkun — Sangon — Magyigon Yamun—Natmauk— Taungdwingyi

4. *Admn.* (*a*) *Rations* (*i*) All parties except the Units going to Natmauk will carry enough rations for the journey, plus 3 days reserve (*ii*) Units bound for Natmauk will carry a minimum of 7 days' reserve rations. All rations that was issued as one month's reserve to Units in this area will be returned to D.Q M G. (*b*) *Medical* —Medical Air Party Hospital closed here on 9th April 1945, patients and stores will be evacuated in accordance with the instructions issued separately by the A D M S

Eventually the unit left Popa on the night of 11/12 April 1945 and after breaking through two enemy encirclements arrived at Magwe

on the mornıng of 19th Aprıl At about 1500 hours on the same day enemy tanks broke through and unıt was ordered to retreat to Prome From Prome, ıt retreated to Taıkyı, approxımately 30 unıts North of Rangoon Then findıng the road blocked ıt turned East ınto the Pegu-Yomas On May 14th after all possıble lınes of wıthdrawal we were blocked and the maın body of the unıt had to surrender to the Brıtısh at Pegu. Full detaıls of thıs trek of 500 mıles from Popa-Pegu are gıven later ın the book

Activities of No. 2 Infantry Regiment.

Thıs regıment was raısed ın Sıngapore ın December 1943 and Colonel Roderıgues was appoınted ıts commander From there ıt was transferred to Ipoh and arrıved at Rangoon early ın Dec 1944

On arrıval ın Rangoon Col P K Sahgal was appoınted ıts Commander ın place of Col Roderıgues who was appoınted as General Staff Officer I to the Dıvısıonal Head Quarters

Early ın Feb 1945 orders were ıssued to the Regıment to proceed to Popa vıa Prome and Kyaukpadang The role allotted to the Brıgade was to prepare Popa Hıll area as a firm base for Guerılla operatıons agaınst the enemy

On Feb 13th Col Sahgal wıth hıs Head Quarters left Rangoon for Popa On the way up he called at the Head Quarters of the Japanese Arakan Command (Saku Butaı) and met General Iwakuro, of Sıngapore fame He was at that tıme workıng as the Chıef of the General Staff to the Arakan command Although he had been transferred from the Japanese Lıaıson department for the I N A after the crısıs ın the first I N A, he was stıll very much ınterested ın the affaırs of the I N A For purposes of operatıons, No 2 Dıvısıon of the I N A was put under Command of Saku Butaı, Gen Iwakuro on beıng ınformed by Col Sahgal that I N A had no artıllery, antı-tank mınes or Antı-tank Guns, promısed to gıve full assıstance to hım

From Saku Butaı Head Quarter, whıch was located ın a jungle approxımately 30 mıles North of Rangoon on Prome Road, proceeded to Yennawgyaung, and met General Yamamoto, who was

commanding Japanese Division operating in the area and close contact with them was established and sectors for operations were mutually decided upon.

It was here that Col. Sahgal learnt that No. 4 Guerilla Regiment (Nehru Brigade) had been in action at Nyangu and Pagan and had been forced to fall back on Popa and Kyauk Padang The situation had become very grave. Col. Sahgal, therefore decided to push on to Popa with his troops as fast as he could and to stem the enemy advance on Popa and Kyauk Padang.

In the meantime the enemy having crossed the Irrawaddy at Nyangu and Pagan and Pakokou occupied Pyinbin, Taungtha and the outskirts of Meiktila. It was at this time that Netaji was nearly encircled by the British forces in Meiktila. Col Sahgal arrived at Popa on 18th Feb and immediately took in hand the preparation of the defences of Popa. His unit was arriving in small parties of approximately 200 men at a time.

In the meantime he met Major G S Dhillon who had withdrawn for Nyangu, and they pooled all their resources and decided to defend Popa and Kyaukpadang

On Feb. 22. I, (Col. Shahnawaz Khan) arrived at Popa and took over the command of No 2. Division and alloted tasks to Brigades as under·—

1. No, 2 Infantry Regiment under Col P K Sahgal was to prepare Popa as a strong base for offensive operations against the enemy that had crossed the Irrawaddy. They were also ordered to carry out intensive patrol activity due North and North East of Popa. Popa Hill area was the most important point in the plan for the defence of Burma It was a small hilly platoon which had three important roads meeting on it. It was the only water source for the area 20 miles all round, It was therefore a place of great strategic importance, the occupation of which would affect the entire plan of operation in this sector It was ideally suited for defence. The preparation of defence works was taken in hand by No. 2. Regiment in real earnest Arms were alloted to Battalions as under.—

(a) No 1 Battalion area around Pyinbin-Popa Road.

(b) No. 2. Battalion—on area around Kyauk Padang-Popa road

(c) No 3 Battalion—area around road Taungtha

In addition to this No. 2 Battalion had to hold a defensive position approximately 1 mile east of Kyaukpadang on Kyauk Padang-Meiktila Road.

2. No 4 (Nehru Brigade) Regt. under Major G. S. Dhillon was ordered to carry out Guerilla warfare against the enemy west of Kyauk Padang,

On the morning of 24th Feb, it was reported to Col Sahgal then officiating as Divisional commander in the absence of Col. Shahnawaz Khan who had returned to Meiktila to report situation to Netaji, that the enemy had broken through in Seiktin and was moving in the direction of Popa. Strong Reconnaisance and fighting patrol were sent out and contact made with the enemy.

A few days later one of our patrols commanded by S. O. Abdulla Khan, while reconnoitring the area in the vicinity of village Daungle, saw a mechanized patrol of the enemy coming towards Daungle village. He immediately decided to attack them. Dividing his little force of approximately 20 men in two parties, S. O. Abdulla Khan advanced on the enemy who opened fire on them. Our men took cover and returned the fire inflicting casualties on them. S. O. Abdulla Khan then by clever manoeuvring and by use of fire and movement tactics led the party close to the enemy and then charged but the opponents had left already That day the enemy left behind two dead and three Jeep cars. Our men also captured wireless sets, machine guns and large quantities of ammunition.

Next day approximately one enemy battalion supported by tanks and artillery advanced on Daungle village and it looked as if they would attack Popa. Our men took up their posts and waited for the enemy to come Strong fighting patrols were also sent out to harrass the enemy's advances.

The enemy advanced on Daungle village and after intensive

shelling occupied it. There were no I N.A troops there. They then set the village on fire and in the evening withdrew towards Pyinbin.

For the next few days No 2. Regiment had no trouble from the enemy who thought it advisable to keep at a respectable distance from Popa.

On March 14, No. 2. Regiment was ordered to carry out a raid on Pyinbin The raid party marched off from Popa at 23-00 hours. It was composed of 2 rifle companies under command of Col. Sahgal. Since there was no water in the area where they were to operate they had to carry it on bullock carts. The situation of No. 2 Infantry Regiment was very unsatisfactory regarding arms and Ammunition.

The unit was armed with 3 Dutch mortars and had only 80 rounds of ammunition for mortars with no hope of receiving any more supplies. Their medium machineguns were of two different types some were of British make, others were Dutch. Each gun had only 400 rounds of ammunition with it, and there were no prospect of receiving a fresh supply. For our light automatics we had a mixed assortment of Bren Guns and Lewis Guns. Every soldier carried 100 rounds of ammunition and there was no reserve of ammunition with the Brigade The unit had only enough ammunition to last it for two hours continuous fighting

Owing to the open nature of the country the sub-units had to be dispersed over large areas. We had no wireless or telephone inter communications.

This raiding party having left Popa at 2300 hours reached Setsayo at 0600 hours It was occupied by a small outpost of the Japanese. The march was very heavy due to the sandy nature of the soil. Bullock carts carrying water could not reach the men. With the result that they had to buy water from the local inhabitants

During the day our men concealed themselves. Col Sahgal contacted the Japanese commander and learnt whatever he could of the enemy disposition As a result of the information received from our own patrols, Col. Sahgal decided to attack Pyinbin on the night of the 15th/16th. March.

They started off from Setsayo at 2130 hours and reached a place called Meyne Here the force was divided into two parts One party was to make a faint attack from the right whereas the main attack was to come a little later from the left This show was entirely successful, and the enemy, feeling that he was in danger of being cut off and annihilated, left their trenches and retreated. Our men attacked their trenches later but found them empty. Only at one small post did they put up any resistence, but even this was eventually destroyed by Lt. Joginder Singh who threw handgrenades into it, killing approximately 8 men. In this operation one platoon of the Japanese from Setsayo was placed under direct command of Lt. Jogınder Singh. We had one man killed and one wounded After destroying various stores and huts in Pyinbin one force returned to Setsayo and on the morning of 17th March they returned to Popa

At this time extremely heavy fighting was going on at Meiktila between the British forces and the Japanese Some I. N. A. units were also operating in that sector. The British force had occupied all the aerodromes and had cut off all the roads leading into Meiktila, from Mandalay, Rangoon, Thazi, and Kyauk Padang. Since Meiktila was the nerve centre of the Japanese resistence in Burma, they were making supreme efforts to recapture it A powerful counter offensive was launched against the British by the Japanese from Thazi, Pyaybine, Myingyan, and Kyauk Padang.

About the 20th March 1945, it was decided that it would be a great help to the Japanese attacking Meiktila if one of the forces could occupy Pyinbin, which was an important road junction and through which all supplies and reinforcements reached Meiktila The enemy after our last raid on Pyinbin, had strengthened its defences very considerably, and it was believed that there was one Battalion stationed there, and also large stores had been collected.

It was finally decided that the I N A and the Japanese would launch a continued attack on Pyinbin and annihilate the garrison and destory all the stores, and the following operation orders were issued for the attack ,—

(a) The enemy · An enemy mechanized column estimated to be approximately one Bde. that infiltrated into Meiktila late last month, is still there. It is being reinforced by the enemy who formed strong bridge-heads at Nyangu and Pakoku The strength of the enemy at these bridge-heads is estimated to be approx. 2 Bdes.

It is also learnt that the enemy has recently occupied Pyinbin with 10 tanks, 10 armoured cars and approx. one Bn. of Infantry. At Thedaw approx. 12 miles N. E. of Pyinbin enemy's reserves for Taungtha front are located. Strong detachment of enemy are also known to be in the vicinity of Myingyan, Taungtha and Mahlaing.

(b) Own and Allied Troops. Powerful Japanese forces are fiercely attacking Meiktila and have managed to push the enemy out of the town to west side of the lake.

On our front one fresh Heidan has arrived at Seiktan 10 miles S. E. of Pyinbin.

Khanjo Units are at Setsetyo, four miles south of Pyinbin Further west on the Kyauk Padaung-Nayangu Road, one fresh .Buttn has taken over the defence of Taungzin and Mayaukye Negalaine from No. 459 Unit. The advance of Kantetsu on both sides of the Irrawaddy is progressing satisfactorily.

Intention . No. 531 Unit will attack, in co-operation with Khanjo, and annihilate the enemy garrison in Pyinbin on the night of March 30/31

3. *Method.* As a preliminary to the attack, units from their present locations will concentrate in the areas on dates shown below :—

(a) Unit	Place	Date
(a) No. 545 Unit,	Seiktein	Night 29/30 March.
(b) 1. Khanjo Units	Oyin (2 miles S E. Pyinbin.)	
	Taungdaw (5 miles South of Pyinbin)	
(II) No, 450 Unit & Hosokawa Units	Cross Roads 6 miles S. W. of Pyinbin,	Do.

On the night 30/31 March Khanjo and No. 450 Unit will move forward from their concentration areas and carry out the assault

on Pyinbin at 0100 hrs, and annihilate the enemy. No 545 Unit will send forward strong detachment to cut off from the East Roads (I) Pyinbin—Tada, (II) Pyinbin—Thabyewa, (III) Pyinbin—Kama.

These detachments will be in position by 2300 hours on the night of 30/31st March. During the attack on Pyinbin by No. 450 Unit and Khanjo, No 545 unit will step and annihilate any enemy that tries to escape from Pyinbin by these roads and also to stop any reinforcements from coming into Pyinbin from East and N E No 531 Unit Operation Order No. 2 They will carry sufficient mines to effectively block all roads against enemy tanks Heavy artillery will support the attack from the direction of Oyin

Action after the attack . On completion of the attack, all units of No 531 Unit will fall back on their original starting lines before daybreak. During the day the troops will be well-dispersed and every precaution will be taken against losses from enemy aeroplanes and A F. Vs

4 Administration

Supply routes for units will be as under

(a) No 450 Unit —Popaywa-Daungie-Cress Road (S W of Pyinbin).

(b) No 545 Unit—Popaywa-Seiktein

As many bullock carts as are necessary will be commandeered locally by units and on termination of the attack will be returned to the owners, Ration, water and other Supplies All unit demand will be submitted to D Q M G. Popaywa, who will do his best to comply with them A minimum of seven days' dry rations will be dumped in forward areas under unit arrangements. S A A A very very small reserve of 303″ S A A Ball is available with D.Q M G. Units are requested to exercise utmost economy in the use of ammunition, A/Tk Mines A very limited number are available These are being sent with trained engineers to assist units.

Medical All casualties will be evacuated to Popaywa. A small quantity of bleaching powder for use in case where water cannot be boiled is being supplied to Units.

Inter-communication. No. 450 Unit.—No. 531 Unit will be by wireless through Hosokawa Unit. No 545 Unit —No. 531 Unit by Wireless Battle H. Q 531 Unit will move from Popaywa to vicinity of Seiktein on night of 29/30 March. Main H. Q. 531 Unit remain at Popaywa under command of Major Ram Sarup.

Special Instructions to Units.—1 Attack on Pyinbin is more in the nature of a surprise guerilla raid with the intention of causing as much damage to the enemy as possible and then clearing out of it Comds must use the troops very cautiously and avoid all unnecessary casualties 2. Where possible some live prisoners will be brought back. 3 All papers, other documents and any units distinguishing badges found in enemy camp will be brought back

Distribution.—

No 450 Unit	1	
No. 545 „	1	Shah Nawaz Khan, Colonel,
No. 50 „	1	Commander, No. 531 Unit.

Reconnaissance patrols were sent out, some of whom went behind the enemy lines, and brought back valuable information.

On March 28, the Divisional Head Quarters moved out into the battle area

On the evening of the 29th March, Units of the No 2 Brigade moved out into the area of operation to take up their positions in readiness to attack Col. P. K. Sahgal left Popa at 21-00 hours accompanied by reconaissance parties of Brigade H Q, and the No. 1. Battalion The party was carried in one Jeep and one truck, and was preceded by a motor cyclist. As the patrols had reported that the area of Seiktin was clear of the enemy, Col. Sahgal's idea was to proceed to Seiktin and Wellaung and he personally selected areas for companies

That night as the troops were marching to the assembly area, I was going up and down the road in a Jeep car. At about 23-00 hours, when I was at Legy, I heard intensive machine gun and rifle fire few hundred yards ahead. Shortly afterwards one officer came running to me and reported that the whole of Col. Sehgal's

party had been ambushed by the enemy They had walked straight into the trap laid for them The enemy had opened fire on them from a range of about 30 yards, and it was a miracle how any one of them could have been saved. There were 14 bullet holes, in the car which was carrying Col Sahgal By this time the marching column of the No 2. company had also arrived and I decided to move forward and look for Col Sahgal The officer who brought back the information did not know if Col. Sahgal and his party had been killed or captured A short while afterwards Col. Sahgal also arrived and explained the whole situation to me We decided to push on and recapture our Jeep car and truck.

A counter attack was put in and all our vehicles were recovered, but the enemy had taken away all the papers and other documents including marked maps and operation orders

By this time it was very late and there was no time left to advance any further It was, therefore, decided to fall back on Legy and take up a defensive position there.

Action at Kabyu

On the 30th March, one of our companies, posted at Kabyu with the object of taking part in the raid on Pyinbin, was heavily attacked by enemy infantry and tanks This company was commanded by an officer by the name of Capt Bagri, who was commanding the No 3 Battalion, but who had come up to personally command the company raiding Pyinbin On his right flank was posted a Japanese Company At about 10 a m. an enemy force of approximately, 1000 men and several tanks was seen advancing towards Kabyu from the direction of Pyinbin Our men were entrenched in the middle of an absolutely open plain with practically no cover from the ground or the air, and our only defence against those tanks were a few anti tank mines which we had borrowed from the neighbouring Japanese unit and planted in a circle in front of our position. The futility of holding up the enemy on such a piece of ground was clear to everyone of our soldiers The enemy air force was also most active and since

day break they had been bombing and machine gunning our positions. But dispite this, men were determined to carry out the task alloted to them.

At first the enemy advanced on the Japanese front and one of their tanks were disabled by an anti-tank mine. Seeing this the Japanese soldiers were very much encouraged The enemy tank column then turned towards our position They were followed by the infantry which had deployed in readiness for the battle On approaching our position another enemy tank ran into one mine-field and was knocked out. This cheered our soldiers a great deal and stopped the advance of enemy tanks Enemy infantry, however, kept on advancing They were British troops and on seeing them coming so near our men fixed Bayonets and shouting "Jai Hind" and "Netaji ki Jai" they advanced 200 yards to meet the enemy The Japanese, on seeing our soldiers charging, followed suite and advanced 600 yards

The strength of this Japanese company was approximately 150 men. The enemy who numbered approximately 1,000 men opened up intensive machine gun and rifle fire on them and having pinned them to the ground, proceeded to encircle them. The Japanese lost nearly 60% of their officers and men, and the remainder threatened with encirclement, turned round and ran back to their entrenched position leaving all their dead and wounded on the battle field

Capt Bagri who was watching all this opened intensive fire on the enemy and inflicted severe losses on them He then counter attacked from a flank and drove them back, and brought back all the Japanese dead and wounded to their lines. In the evening the Japanese Brigadier in the area came to thank me personally and to express his gratitude to the I. N A for saving the Japanese company and for bringing in their dead and wounded.

That night was fixed for our raid on Pyinbin, but this had to be postponed owing to the capture of our operation orders by the enemy Also on the evening of 30th March the Japanese artillery unit, which was to proceed to Oyin and give supporting fire to our troops attacking Pyinbin was attacked by enemy aircraft and all their

guns and ammunition was destroyed.

Next day Capt Bagri was ordered to fall back on Gwedekkon and guard the left flank of the No 1. Battalion holding a defensive position at Legy

On the night of March 30/31, the date fixed for the raid on Pyinbin, units of No. 4. Guerilla Regiment (Nehru Brigade) and Khan Jo Butai, the Japanese Brigade, reached their respective areas and waited for the artillery to open fire from Oyin, but unfortunately due to enemy bombing earlier in the evening all the guns had been knocked out. Early in the morning our units returned to their respective assembly areas and were ordered to wait for further orders to raid Pyinbin

Intensive patrolling was then resorted to by both sides and our patrols from Legy often entered Seiktin and brought back information about the enemy's strength and disposition On the 2nd April at about 1300 hrs the enemy machine-gunned and shelled our positions at Legy We lost six men due to this shelling. On this day our units at Legy, where they were only partially entrenched due to the shortage of entrenching tools, were subjected to a most intensive machine gunning and bombing by enemy aeroplanes. For two hours fourteen enemy fighter bombers bombed and machine gunned our position At the same time enemy artillery kept up an intensive barrage of fire on our position throughout the day, and it was a miracle how we escaped more casualties. To reply to this artillery fire the heaviest weapons that we had were three three inch mortars which were useless in the face of artillery Most of our men faced all this very bravely, but there were a number of weak-minded persons who walked over to the enemy This naturally caused disappointment in our ranks but now when I look back at it and think of the extremely heavy odds against which our men were fighting a battle which they realised very well they had already lost, I do not blame those persons who walked over to the enemy.

At this time the general situation of the fighting in Burma had taken a very critical turn for us and the Japanese.

Firstly, in the Shan States the enemy had captured Kalaw and was advancing on Tangyi and Mochi Mines with the object of outflanking the Japanese main defence at Toungoo

Secondly, in the Central Sector the enemy had occupied Meiktila and fighting was going on at Pyabwe.

Thirdly, further west, on the Meiktila—Kyaukpadang road, the enemy had advanced approximately fifteen miles and powerful column of mechanised infantry and tanks had moved down South and occupied Natmauk and Taundwingyi

Fourthly, on the Popa front one powerful division had arrived at Taungtha and was advancing along the Taungtha—Popa Road.

Fifthly, on the Irrawaddy the enemy had extended his bridgeheads at Nyangu and Pakokou.

And, lastly, in Arakan front the enemy had captured Taungup and was advancing rapidly on Prome.

The Burmese army, which had been raised and trained by the Japanese, left Rangoon in the middle of March under the command of Gen Aung Sang, with the object of holding up the enemy advance around Prome On reaching Prome this army, approximately 7,000 strong, crossed over the Irrawaddy to the west in the area of Thayetmeyo. On reaching this area, where there were very few Japanese troops, this army declared itself independent of the control of the Burmese Government and declared war against the Japanese They were then split up into small guerilla bands and ordered to carry out guerilla operation against the Japanese lines of communication from Rangoon to Prome and from Rangoon to Toungoo They carried out this duty in a most efficient manner and they made it impossible for the Japanese to supply their front-line troops with rations and ammunition and thus further aggravated the already critical position of the Japanese These Burmese guerillas dressed as ordinary civilians and lived in Burmese villages where they were given food and shelter by the local inhabitants.

They were always on the look out for small parties of Japanese troops whom they annihilated whenever they had an opportunity I

would say that the unexpected collapse of Japanese resistence of Burma was due more to the defection of the Burmese Army rather than to the might of the British forces On the other hand, I feel that the Burmese had sufficient cause to resort to this course of turning round and fighting against their former allies Ever since the occupation of Burma by the Japanese they had exploited the country in a most ruthless manner. It is true that they had declared Burma to be an independent country and they had raised a Burmese Army, but both these were in reality unreal. The head of the Burmese state, Dr. Baw Maw and his ministers were weak minded and selfish and easily submitted to Japanese exploitation and the Army because it was under the direct control of Japanese officers & was incapable of functioning independently. After three years of Japanese rule, which the Burmese themselves had helped to establish by fighting the British forces in 1942, the Burmese people found that they were better off under the British Food was very scarce as all the rice and cattle were commandeered by the Japanese army There was a great shortage of cloth as well because Burma used to get most of its cloth from India and Japan. Money had lost all its value, and a chicken costed as much as sixty rupees and an egg three rupees. Neither the Japanese nor the puppet Burmese Government took any interest in the welfare of the people and practically no arrangements were made for the education of their children On account of all these reasons the people of Burma were very unhappy and dissatisfied with the Japanese occupation All the beautiful cities and towns were being bombed to extinction by the British and American air forces The Burmese were, therefore, anxious that the war which had brought so much unhappiness and devastation to Burma, should be terminated as soon as possible Those very Burmese who had expected so much from the Japanese and had co-operated so enthusiastically with them now welcomed return of the British forces to Burma. It was at this stage that General Aung Sang, a 32 year old Burmese revolutionary, decided to revolt against the Japanese and end their control over the Burmese army and the Government. Together with a few trusted

officers and some Burmese priests who exercised considerable influence over the Burmese people he made secret plans for the overthrow of Japanese rule In the middle of March, when he left Rangoon at the head of a Burmese army, he was given a rousing send off both by the Burmese and Japanese The Japanese military men and officers commanding Burmese units also accompanied them. On reaching Thayetmayo the first thing they did was to murder all the Japanese officers, and thereafter worked in small independent guerilla bands attacking and destroying all lorries and railway trains supplying rations and ammunition to the front line troops.

Encouraged by these successes, the majority of the local youth joined them and took every available opportunity of attacking Japanese soldiers with their "Dha" a small Burmese sword and snatching away their rifles

The Battle Of Legy

It was in this unenviable situation that No. 2 Division of the Azad Hind Fauj was fighting and successfully holding up the advance of the enemy in Popa-Kyaukpadang sector. The enemy decided to use all available forces at his disposal to clear up this pocket of resistance, and an attack on our forces from three directions was planned. The plan was as follows

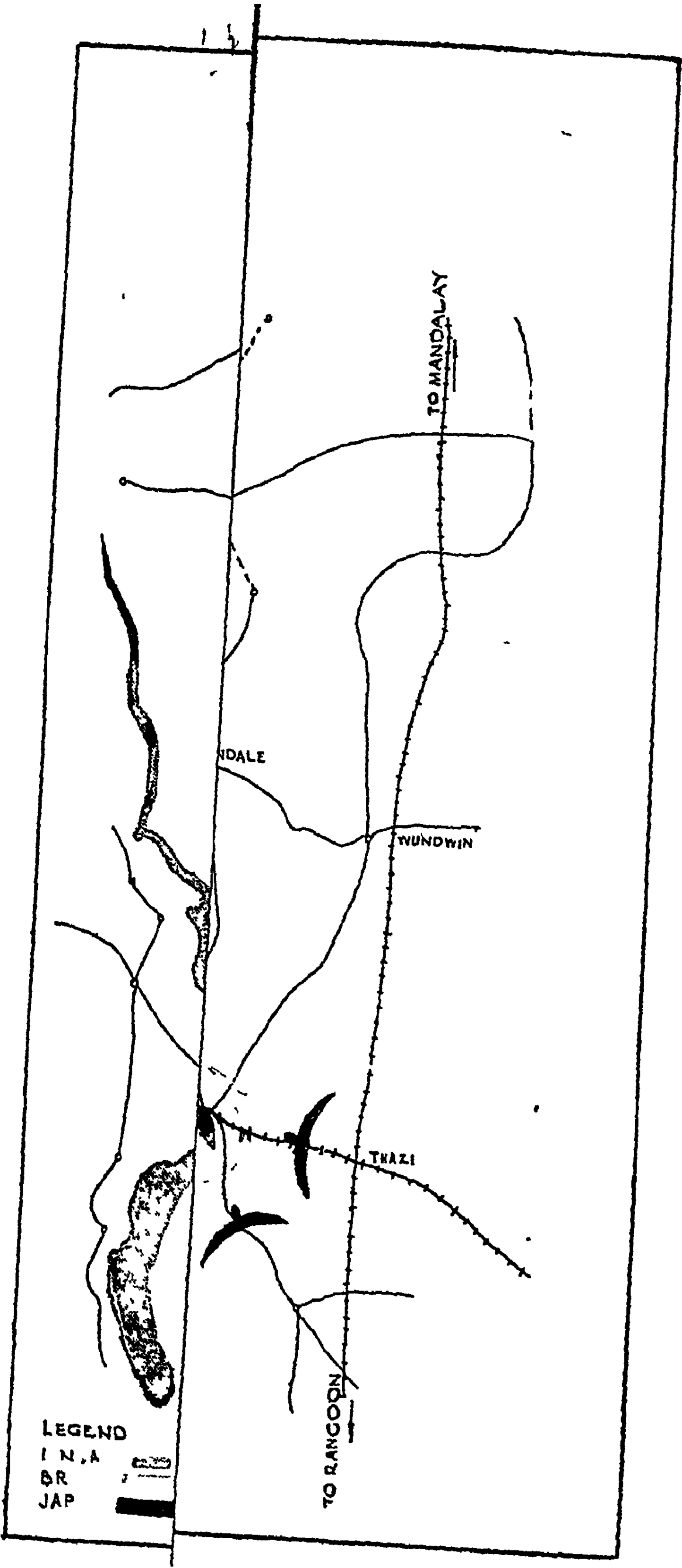
(*a*) Number 2 British Division was to attack down from Taungtha *via* Wellaung-Seiktin-Popa

(*b*) Number 7 British Division was to attack from Nyaungu-to Kyaukpadang.

(*c*) Number 5 British Division was to attack from Meiktila-Kyaukpadang

It was to meet the thrust of the No 2 British Division at Popa that the No 2 Infantry Regiment of the Azad Hind Fauj was posted at Legy.

On the 1st April, an outpost located astride Seiktin-Wellaung sent the following reports about enemy movement —(1) at 11-30 hours ten enemy tanks with fifty men were going towards Legy from Wellaung.


TO MANDALAY
NDALE
WUNDWIN
THAZI
TO RANGOON
LEGEND
I N A
BR
JAP

(ii) At 15-30 hours eighteen lorries, two tanks, one armoured car, two motor cycles and two heavy guns were seen moving towards Legy from Wellaung. The lorries were carrying stores and soldiers

(iii) At 16-00 hours some more tanks were seen moving towards Legy. All the tanks in the above mentioned enemy force were medium and heavy Sherman and Churchill tanks. The whole of this force advanced as far, as Seiktin and halted there

A strong fighting patrol under Sub-officer Abdullah Khan was sent to Seiktin area This patrol went forward and was engaged by enemy patrols sent from Seiktin. It returned to Brigade head quarters at 1040 hours on the 2nd April, 1945. During the night of the 1st/2nd April there was practically no enemy activity on our front.

On the 2nd. April, at 11-30 hours approximately two thousand enemy soldiers were seen digging in south of Seiktin, and at 13-10 hours fourteen enemy planes heavily bombed and machine gunned Legy for about two hours The whole of the village was set on fire and all our rations, including water which had to be brought up on bullock carts and lorries, were destroyed. As soon as this air attack was over enemy artillery opened up a most intensive and harrassing fire on our position. This fire continued till 2100 hours.

From 1500-1700 hours enemy patrol activity continued. At 1700 hours an enemy force consisting of 5 lorries, supported by tanks, moved from Seiktin towards Legy The enemy, on reaching our front descended from their lorries and advanced towards our positions. When they came within range of our machine guns we opened fire on them. Some of the enemy were seen falling down and the remainder disappeared into the Nullah. Tanks and lorries also turned about and raced towards Seiktin This raised the morale of our men and they were all in good spirits. For the rest of the day there was no enemy activity. It was quite apparent that during the day the enemy had been reconnoitring and feeling our positions, and that a full scale attack was imminent the next day. Therefore, one company from the number three Battalion was brought up from Popa and posted on the right flank of the No. 1 Battalion at Legy.

This company was commanded by 2nd Lt. Kanwal Singh, a young officer who had been trained at the Officers Training School at Singapore. He was a Naik in the British army when it surrendered in Singapore.

On the 3rd April, 1945, a certain amount of alarm and despondency was observed among the officers and men owing to the desertion of some officers Every body appeared to feel that the enemy had full information about our disposition and in view of their overwhelming weight our case was hopeless At this stage, Colonel Sahgal who was present at Legy, personally took over the direction of the battle. At 11-30 hours an enemy force composed of —

13 medium tanks 30 light tanks 60 lorries 12 guns 1,000 Infantry advanced in the front of our "C" company which was on the left flank.

At 12-00 hours Enemy artillery opened intensive harassing fire on our position

At 13-00 hours. One enemey force consisting of 11 medium tanks 30 armoured cars 60 lorries was observed advancing towards Legy. This force halted at about 1,000 yards in front of our position and deployed

At 13-30 hours. A small force of the enemy went round our right flank and attacked our "B" Echelon. This was a complete surprise to our men who were caught cooking food or carrying rations and water The casualties on our side were very heavy The enemy occupied this area but no information of this action was received in Headquarters until 19-00 hours.

13-45 hours Heavy shelling on the right flank followed by an attack by approximately one battalion on the position occupied by the company of 2nd Lt Kanwal Singh. This enemy came very near our position and it was only after a very fierce battle at close quarters that the enemy was forced to retreat with extremely heavy casualties

14-00 hours. Approximately one platoon of the enemy that had infiltrated through our position had opened fire from our rear.

This fire was returned and the enemy was dislocated from his position. By this time enemy artillery and mortars were shelling us from the front and our right, rear and left

16-00 hours Enemy artillery opened rapid fire on our right flank continued to fire for approximately ten minutes, during which period they must have fired at least 150 shells. This was followed by an attack by a fresh enemy battalion on Lt Kanwal Singh's company. This company once again defended their positions most gallantly and drove the enemy back after inflicting heavy casualties on them

During the whole of this operation 2nd Lt Kanwal Singh, the company Commander, and Hawildar Abdul Mannu, one of the platoon commanders, stood on top of two hills and personally directed the fire of their units These two brave officers did not stir from their command post even when the small arms fire was concentrated on them It was due mainly to the gallantry of these two officers that the repeated enemy attacks were beaten off.

By now it was apparent that the enemy was determined to make a break-through on our right flank and the "C" company, which was on the left flank, was withdrawn and put in support of Lt. Kanwal Singh's company

19-00 hours Report was received about the enemy attack on our "B" echelon and the enemy occupation of that area. The "C" company was accordingly ordered to counterattack and drive away the enemy from that area. The attack was launched at 21-00 hours by Lt. Ganga Singh and was entirely successful. The enemy, after suffering severe losses fled in disorder.

19-30 hrs Heavy artillery fire was once again opened on our right flank, and Lt Kanwal Singh's company was again attacked for the third time and once again the gallant company beat back the enemy attack At the same time an enemy force composed of approximately two companies accompanied by tanks moved towards our left flank in front of the "B" company and after an exchange of fire this force was easily pushed back.

About this time Col Sehgal asked for more reinforcements

and another company of 3rd Battalion under the command of Major B. S. Negi was sent forward to him

On the 4th. April, at about 03-00 hours because our position had been encircled by the enemy and our men who had fought most gallantly against extremely heavy odds were exhausted, orders were issued to Col Sahgal to fall back on Popa This was done and they arrived at Popa at 07-00 hours.

On the same day an order was issued to Col G. S. Dhillon to return with his unit to Popa, which he did with the Nehru Brigade on the 5th April. I held a conference of Brigade commanders at which it was decided to allot the defence of Popa to the Nehru Brigade, and infantry regiment under Colonel P. K. Sahgal was ordered to reorganise and hold itself in readiness to take the offensive against the enemy.

On the 7th April, our company at Kyauktaga, two miles North of Popa, was attacked by the enemy but the attack was successfully beaten back. On the 8th April I received orders that the No 2 division was to withdraw from Popa to the area of Magwe-Minbu-Yaunbuingyi where the No 1 Infantry Regiment, under the Command of Col. S. M Hussain had been operating since March 1945.

The new task allotted to units were the defence of their respective areas against enemy parachutists and guarding the lines of communication.

Withdrawal From Popa

Units at Popa were ordered to start moving on April 10th and routes alloted to them for their withdrawal were ·

Div H. Q and No. 4 regiment were to use a cart track running through the following village Kyauk Padang-Ywalu-Yezon Okshitton-Wetmasut-Magwe.

No. 2 Infantry was to use the track Kyauk Padang-Kyatkun-Saigon-Magyigaon-Ywamun-Natmauk-Taundwingyi.

On the 10th April the area of our hospital and Divisional Headquarters were heavily bombed by 35 British bombers which

- dropped high explosive and incendiary bombs causing numerous casualties among our sick and wounded This information must have been given to the British by the officers and men who had deserted to the British side On the same day, the Divisional Head Quarters came under heavy enemy artillery fire.

On the 12th April our forward Company at Kyauktag was encircled by enemy tanks and infantry This was the company commanded by Lt Kanwal Singh who had put up such a magnificent fight at Legy They fought on inspite of being completely cut off from the rest of the Battalion The British Commander realizing the hopeless situation in which the company was placed, sent a note to Lt. Kanwal Singh to surrender Kanwal Singh replied "Gentleman I still have some ammunition left I do not come to you yet". He fought on till all his ammunition was completely exhausted and he was then forced to surrender

On the same day, the enemy, after a most intensive artillery shelling occupied Kyauk Padang and thus cut off our only line of retreat to Yennan, Gyaung and Magwe.

In the meantime the enemy from Meiktila was heavily attacking our posts approximately 10 miles East of Kyauk Padang, and it was with the greatest of difficulty that they were holding to their position

The main body of the division left Popa on April 12/13th at 0200 hours On the way to Kyauk Padang we found the road blocked by enemy patrols. We were therefore, obliged to abandon all our mechanical transport on the road and to attempt to break through the enemy encirclement Capt Khan Mohd of the No. 4 Guerilla Regiment was detailed as advance Guard Commander and ordered to create a gap, through which the rest of the Division would escape. To hold up the enemy's advance on the Popa—Taungtha road the No 3 Battalion under Capt Bagri, was left behind at Popa to give time to the rest of the Division to break through

On 13th April at 0800 hours, the Division had broken through the enemy's encirclement and arrived in the area of Indowakki This was an open area with a few trees here and there. In this area, the

whole of the Division rested for the day and it was a miracle how we escaped from the observation of enemy aircraft, which were patrolling the area continuously. The same day Capt. Bagri's Battalion at Popa, having completed its task returned to Indowakki and joined its Brigade.

On the evening of the 13th April, in the vicinity of Indowakki, I gave final instructions to unit commanders. The previous night Col. Sahgal had fallen down and had sprained his ankle. He had to be carried on a bullock cart, as also the rest of the sick and wounded of the Division. From Indowakki we took different routes as already explained, but unfortunately the enemy had already occupied Natmauk and Taundungyi, and so Col. Sahgal had to byepass these places and make an attempt to reach Prome. On the way all his rations were exhausted and the enemy force was following close at his heels. In the initial stages of their journey, the No. 2. Regiment marched together in one column, but later on, after they arrived in the area of Natmauk, Col Sahgal decided to split up his force in two columns. This was considered essential on account of the difficulty of obtaining rations locally for such a large number of men, and also because their was danger of being spotted by British aeroplanes which were carrying out a very thorough search of the whole area One column consisting of Brigade Head Quarters No. 2. Battation and No 1. Battalion marched off under Col. Sahgal. The second column, consisting of the No. 3 Battalion under Capt. Bagri, mached off on a parallel track a few circles apart Both these columns managed successfully to evade the enemy and byepass Taundwingyi.

Heroic Death of Capt. Bagri

On about the 20th April, when Capt Bagri's column was approximately 20 miles South of Taundwingyi, they were overtaken and encircled by enemy tanks At the time the Battalion was dispersed in a small village in the middle of open paddy fields Sentries reported to Capt. Bagri that enemy tanks in large numbers were approaching the village. His Battalion was not prepared for this attack. They had not even had time to dig themselves in, neither did they have any

weapons to combat those steel monsters. The choice before Capt. Bagri was that of surrendering to enemy of putting up a hopeless fight and meeting a glorious death. He called out to his men and explained the situation to them. He said, "We have been encircled by enemy tanks. We can now either surrender shamefully or meet a glorious death fighting like a true soldier." He went on to say, "I myself can never think of laying down my arms, before the cowardly British. I have decided to fight to the last." So saying he led a party of 100 men into action against enemy tanks. With hand grenades and bottles filled with petrol they charged into enemy vehicles and destroyed one tank and one armoured car. While charging into a second tank Capt. Bagri was hit by a burst of machine gun fire and fell never to rise again. Most of the men who were following him were also killed.

British officers, who saw this action of Capt. Bagri, were dumbfounded by his gallantry and complete disregard for his personal safety. They wanted to know the reason why Capt. Bagri, inspite of realizing the impossible odds against him, charged into the enemy tanks, and met his death. The reason of course was a simple one, but rather difficult to understand for an Englishman. The true sons of India can be killed, but they can never be defeated. Bagri knew when he was charging into the enemy tanks that he was asking for certain death, but he was not afraid of it. He could never accept defeat. In this way died one of the bravest soldiers of the Azad Hind Fauj.

On the 27th April having successfully evaded the enemy at Taundwingyi, the second column under Col. Sahgal arrived at a small village called Myew. This village was approximately 2 miles north of Allenmayo. Here they found that heavy fighting was going on in Allenmayo and gun fire was being exchanged by both sides. Col. Sahgal then selected a place called Magi Gaon, approximately three miles to the East of the road, and ordered his units to take up a defensive position there. This area was well suited for a defensive position as it was surrounded on three sides by hills and on the fourth side was a river bed. Stray piquets were posted on all the hills and

the party rested there for the night Next morning a conference was called by Col Sahgal which was attended by all officers of the unit. He explained to them the military situation in Burma as a whole and particularly the situation on their part of the front. He told them that Allenmayo was already occupied by the enemy and that the main road to Prome had been blockaded by the enemy. He then pointed out to his men that there were 3 courses open to them. The 1st one was that they should fight their way through the enemy lines as they had done before and rejoin the division at Prome, the second course was that they should all disguise themselves as civilians and infiltrate through the enemy lines, and the 3rd was that they should all become prisoners of war. Having explained all this he left the final choice to the officers themselves All the officers then requested that they should be given an hour's time to consider the matter After one hour they all re-assembled and informed Col. Sahgal that they had decided unanimously in favour of becoming P O Ws After this Col. Sahgal wrote a letter to the Commander of the Allied troops communicating his decision to surrender his forces to the British as prisoners of war. He then ordered all the officers to return to their units and inform their men of this decision. He also ordered all the pickets to withdraw into the village

At about 1 p m. information was received that some Gurkha troops were advancing on the village Col Sahgal told all his men to keep clear and not to get excited and fire on the enemy. He then went forward and met the Commander of the Gurkha troops, and arranged for the surrender of his forces They were then taken to to Magwe jail.

Retreat Of Divisional Headquarters No. 4 Regiment

On the night of the 13th April 1945, having issued final instructions to Brigade Commanders at Indowakki the Divisional Commander Col. Shahnawaz Khan marched off with his force to Magwe, which was one hundred miles to the south The next morning they arrived at a village called Eino and spent the day in a

Burmese temple Troops had marched the whole night through a sandy area and were very tired indeed At this time the enemy was converging on them from all sides, and all the main roads and highways were in his hands. Col Shahnawaz, therefore, selected Jungle routes to bye-pass the enemy that had gone ahead of them The offensive against the oilfields area was also well on the way and it looked very doubtful if this party would be able to go through the enemy lines and reach Magwe However, despite all these difficulties our men kept on marching Their rations were exhausted and they had to live on whatever they could buy locally from the village.

On the 18th April at 0400 hours this party, having successfully evaded the enemy, arrived at Magwe Here they were met by Col S M Hussain who was the commander of the No 1 Infantry Regiment which had been allotted the defence of Magwe, Minwu Taundwingyi area Troops that arrived with the Divisional Commander were dispersed in the Magwe area while Col. Hussain explained the local military situation of his area to the Divisional Commander He revealed that Taundwingyi, which had been defended by the No 1 Battalion under Commander Major B. S Rawat, had been occupied by the enemy and that fierce counterattacks to recapture it were being launched by the I N A and the Japanese On the Magwe front he explained that on the previous evening some enemy tanks had attacked out posts approximately 12 east of Magwe and that on being fired at, these tanks had withdrawn towards Tonangi

It was quite evident from this that the situation was developing fast, and that an attack on Magwe was to be expected either the next day or the day after, Major Man Singh, the commander of the No 2 Battalion defending Magwe, was then detailed to take forward 3 companies to reinforce the outposts which had been attacked the previous day All the sick and valuable stores were sent across the river to Mimbo under the command of Lt Col Rodengues

Here I would like to explain that the No 1 Infantry Regiment which was composed of perhaps the best trained troops in the I N A

had lost all its heavy arms and equipment including 3 mortars and machine guns during the transit from Malaya to Burma Inspite of our best efforts to make good this deficiency we were unable to obtain a fresh supply. It was, therefore only with rifles and light machine guns that they had to defend an absolutely open area like a desert against enemy tanks They did not have any anti-tank mines or guns.

On the following day the enemy dropped parachute troops in the vicinity of our outposts They were immediately engaged by our troops and were forced to retreat. The same day some more troops from Popa arrived at Magwe They had been marching continuously for the last 7 days On account of enemy air activity they could move only at night During the day they had to disperse and take shelter from hostile aircraft During these marches the men had very little sleep. It was, therefore, in a very tired and exhausted condition that our men arrived at Magwe. The first essential, therefore, was to give them a little rest to recoup and reorganise their units.

At about 1500 hours enemy tanks and lorries broke through the line of our out-posts and came into Magwe by complete surprise We had no means of inter-communication other than a runner with our out posts. It was, therefore, not possible for them to have warned us of the approach of enemy tank columns. There were very few troops in Magwe and no organised resistance could be put up Lt Col G. S. Dhillon and Major Chandra Bhan of the No 4 Regiment rallied a few men and formed a line of defence and held up the enemy for some hours and enabled the remnants in Magwe to withdraw to their next destination. They were subjected to meet intensive artillery shelling and serial bombardment, but they tenaciously hung on to their positions until all their comrades had been evacuated from Magwe Some of our troops were, however, forced to surrender in Magwe, and Col S M Hussain, the commander of the No. 1 Infantry Regiment was unfortunately one of them Having completed their task, Col. G S Dhillon and Major Chandra Bhan fell back on Kama where fresh orders were issued by the Divisional Commander to the No. 2 Division to withdraw to Prome. During the night of

the 19th/20th April, all the remnants of the No 2. Division crossed over by local boats to the west bank of the Irrawaddy Information was sent to Col Rodengues at Minbu to withdraw with the No. 3 Battalion of the 1st Infantry Regiment to Prome Unfortunately, information could not reach Man Singh who was holding the out-post position with the No 2 Battalion The following day he was forced to surrender to the British forces in Magwe.

When we crossed over to the west bank of the Irrawaddy, we found that the enemy from Taundwangyi had occupied Migyaungye and Minhla. We were, therefore, obliged to move further west, and by using jungle routes we tried to reach Prome On the 28th April we arrived at a village called Minde, approximately 10 miles north west of Kama During the night, with the help of the Burmese troops who had rebelled against the Japanese, we crossed over at Kama to the east bank of the Irrawaddy. At that time heavy fighting was going on at Allenmaye and the enemy was trying to capture Prome as early as possible

All along our retreat from Kyauk Padang to Prome the Burmese army which had rebelled against the Japanese and had occupied all the area particularly the area west of the Irrawaddy from Minbu to Prome, behaved in a most friendly manner with the I N.A. They had established their own Government in 42 villages west of Prome. In this area there were practically no Japanese troops and any small party of Japanese that tried to escape from British encircle-ment was cut off and slaughtered by the Burmese guerrilla forces The villagers were working in complete co-operation with the Burmese rebel army, which had now adopted the name of "People's National Army", and had declared war upon the Facist Powers Gen. Aung Sang, the Commander of these forces had his Headquarters in the area of Thayetmayo. They established a very effective parallel Govern-ment in the area. In each village they distributed a few soldiers under an officer These officers or NCOS lived in the villages dressed as ordinary villagers and no one ever betrayed their presence or their plans to any foreigner In fact, they were given shelter, food

and protection by the villagers. These men controlled everything in the village and without their co-operation it was not possible to purchase anything from the villagers, nor was it possible to hire any bullock cart, the only form of transport available in these areas. This group of men were specially trained in the duties of administration and intelligence work They obtained with the help of the local villagers all information regarding the movement of the enemy in that area Sentries were posted in all villages to give warning of the approach of enemy troops Each village had a special type of drum made out of a hollowed tree trunk to give warning of the approach of enemy troops. These drums were very effective and the sound carried a long way As soon as these drums were beaten all the villagers, including women and children ran away into previously prepared shelters in the jungles Here in these shelters they had stored away all their corn All their cattle are also hidden away in those jungles with the result that whenever Japanese forces arrived they found the villages completely deserted and without any rations. This was a great handicap to the Japanese forces which lived mainly on the country

Co-operative with this intelligence group were the actual fighting guerrillas who remained hidden in jungles in groups of 40 or 50, fully armed with the most modern Japanese arms and always on the alert It was the task of these fighting groups to annihilate any Japanese force whose presence was reported to them by intelligence groups These guerrilla forces were an absolute terror to the Japanese forces, and on whom they inflicted extremely heavy casualties at that time There was a great scarcity of cloth in Burma, and Burmese Guerrilla forces used to attack Japanese supply dumps and clothing depots or ambush motor convoys and trains carrying such stores and distribute the loot to the villagers. By doing this and by their just and fair administration they won the sympathy and co-operation of all the villagers

While at Popa and Magwe in March 1945, the I.N A was requested by the Japanese to take action against Burmese guerrillas.

But we refused to fight the Burmese on the ground that our fight was only for the liberation of India and against the British who dominated it We were not the Japanese army or under the control of the Japanese army, and as such, we were not prepared to fight the Burmese, who, after all, were also fighting for their liberation These reports had reached Gen Aung Sang who had issued similar instructions to his troops to help the I N A in every possible way and never to fight against them

As is well known, the British, while they were ruling Burma before 1942, had created very bitter feelings between the Burmese and the Indians and during the Japanese advance into Burma in April 1942 when a great number of Indians tried to escape to India, thousands were slaughtered in cold blood by the Burmese. It is said that as many as 50,000 were murdered in this way This change in the Burmese attitude towards Indians must, therefore, seem, amazing, and the only explanation for this change was the personality of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose During the time that he was in Burma he managed to establish most friendly relation with the people of Burma and they came to look upon him as a leader not only of the Indian people but also of the Burmese and other nationals of East Asia Had it not been for the co-operation of the Burmese forces it would not have been possible for the main body of the No 2 Division to reach Prome and later Pegu

On the morning of the 1st May, having got across all the troops to the East bank of the Irrawaddy opposite Kama, I crossed over with the last party which included all officers of my Divisional Headquarters, Col Rodengues, Major Ram Sarup, Major Mehar Dass and Major A B Singh and Col G S Dhillon, who was suffering from an acute attack of appendicitis, was also in this party In the morning we reached a village approximately 5 miles due north of Prome Here I received information that Prome had been evacuated and set on fire by the Japanese It was also intimated to me that Toungoo had been occupied by the British, that Rangoon had been evacuated by the Japanese and the Indian National Army and that all

the I N.A, troops left in Burma had been ordered by Netaji surrender to the British I was, however, not prepared to accept these orders and was determined to continue fighting and to try and reach Netaji, who it was rumoured, was, at that time, in Moulmein. The situation was, therefore, even worse than I had expected and I realised that the trek to Moulmein would be hard and difficult and that the sick and wounded would not be able to face it. I therefore, decided to collect all the sick and wounded personnal in an Indian village called Kalabasthi and left them there under the charge of Col Rodengues and Major Ranganathan These two officers realising that they would receive very bad treatment from the British very sportingly, volunteered to stay behind and look after the sick and wounded. They had been ordered to surrender to the British when they arrived at Prome.

With the remainder, I left Prome on the night of May the 1st At that time enemy was heavily shelling the town and there were no troops to stop their advance. It was a heartbreaking sight when we had to leave the sick behind at Prome. Most of them despite being in an extremely poor state of health wished to accompany the Division. The very idea of having to surrender to the British was revolting to them, but eventually they had to stay behind under orders as I did not wish to see the story of the Imphal withdrawal repeated.

South of Prome was still clear of the enemy, and we, therefore, followed the main Rangoon-Prome Road. The Japanese were retreating in a great hurry They were using every available vehicle to evacuate their men. We had no transport at all and our men kept marching day and night to avoid being overtaken by the enemy forces The Japanese, as usual, left us in the lurch and ran as fast as they could Having no wireless sets we were dependent entirely on them for giving us information about the general situation around us

On May the 5th at 0700 hours we reached a village 2 miles South of Okpo. From here the Japanese forces went East into the the Pegu Yomas. We decided to march on to Letpadan.

On the 7th May our party arrived at a place called Taikchi at about midnight. This place was approximately 30 miles North of

Rangoon. Here we found that the British forces, having occupied Rangoon, were marching north with the object of capturing us Here we were trapped in the encirclement again

I decided to leave the main road and strike east into the Pegu Yomas with the object of infiltrating through the enemy lines and crossing the Sittang river and rejoining our own forces at Moulmein or Bangkok

For about one week we travelled right across the Pegu Yomas through the thickest jungles, and on 12th May reached the village of Niata, approximately 20 miles to the West of Pegu Here I found that the enemy had captured Pegu about a fortnight earlier, and that fighting was going on at Waki

I also learnt that Germany had surrendered unconditionally to the Allies, and that owing to intensive aerial bombardment, Japan was on the verge of collapse. I decided to spend the day in that village and sent a patrol to the next village to get out full information regarding enemy dispositions The patrol returned the next day and brought back all the facts It was quite clear that we were completely trapped and the British forces were closing in on us from all sides

There was also a large number of Japanese troops, approximately 50,000 in number, trapped in a similar manner. We were being bombed and shelled continuously, rations were exhausted, and all the villagers had fled into the Jungles. The Japanese were eating up everything, pigs, buffaloes, cows, dogs and monkeys. The situation was extremely grave and everything looked dark for us

I realised that every thing was over for the rest of us, and I did not see any point in sacrificing any more men under those circumstances Our rations were finished, we had very little ammunition left, and the monsoons had started. On the 13th May, at about 1900 hours we left the village of Niata and halted in a thick jungle to spend the night There, in that tropical forest, at the time of setting sun, I gave my last lecture as Divisional commander to my men—the gallant men who had stood by me through terrible ordeals and privations

I thanked them for the glorious manner in which they had

fought for India's independence, and for the fortitude with which they had faced all hardships. I explained to them how on account of the change in world situation and, owing to the invention of the atom bomb and the collapse of Germany, the struggle which we had waged for nearly two years, had become hopeless, and that it was by no means the end of their struggle for the achievement of their final goal—the liberation of India We had only to change our tactics The struggle for Indian Independence had to go on, whether we had any allies or not I told them that the best course for them was to surrender to the Allies and go into India Those who survived must start the struggle again for Indian Independence inside India

I told them that as far as I was concerned I could not induce myself to surrender to the British, and that I had made up my mind to make a suicidal attack on the British forces and end my life that way. I then asked for 50 volunteers who would come with me prepared for the suicidal attack The 300 men and all officers came forward I explained to them that we had very little money left, with which we could buy rations and that 50 was the maximum number that I required Col Dhillon then selected 50 men out of the 300 volunteers I then bid forewell to the rest and gave them orders to go and surrender I detailed Major Jagir Singh and Major A B Singh to go with the party It was perhaps the most painful day in my life to have to depart from the comrades who had stood by me through all types of hardships. I saw some of those gallant soldiers sobbing like children, those soldiers who had stood up without flinching to the most violent attacks of the enemy. Some of those who had volunteered to come with me, but who had not been selected, loaded their rifles, and with one shout of "Jai Hind" began to shoot themselves. In this way six of them took their own lives In the end I collected them again and talked to them. I told that if there was one more case of suicide, I too would shoot myself This put an end to further suicides

That night we all spent together and the following day I mar-

ched off the party under Major A. B. Singh and Jagir Singh to go and report to the British When they had left, I, with my party of 50 men, which included Col G. S. Dhillon, Major Mehar Dass and some other officers, marched off into the heart of the Pegu-Yoma mountains where we proposed to make a base and carry out suicidal guerilla attacks on the enemy. On the evening of the 14th May we reached a small village called Loga where we spent the night By now heavy rains had set in, and we were obliged to take shelter in village at night All the villages were full of British spies and where ever we went our movements were reported to the British and since we were dependent for our rations upon local villagers we could not disappear into the Jungles

In the meantime, the British, having consolidated their position, were closing in on us We found it difficult on account of the attitude of the local inhabitants to obtain information of regarding the enemy to enable us to attack them successfully. This state of affairs continued for the next few days. During this period I was trying to get myself killed as I did not wish to be captured alive by the British. It was also my desire to inflict the maximum losses on the enemy before I died.

Eventually, on the night of the 17th May, at about 11, on a bright moon lit night we arrived in the vicinity of a village Sitpinzeix I halted the party a few hundred yards outside the village and myself with three men went forward to reconnoitre the village for spending the night there

As I reached the entrance to the village, some one shouted in Hindustani "Tum Kon Ho ? Halt, who are you" ? I replied that we were Indians They again shouted "Tum Kon Ho" ? I shouted back "Tum Kon Ho" and I told them that we were the men of the Indian National Army thinking that they were probably our own men who had refused to go and surrender to the British As soon as they knew that we were men of the I N .A I heard a British officer shout "Rapid Fire" On this order from a range of approximately 15 yards intensive rifle and machine gun fire was opened on us. All

three of my companions who were on my right, left, and one in front were killed outright, and a leather hand bag which contained my diaries, and was produced at the time of my trial by court Martial in the Red Fort, was shot out of my hand I remained untouched through some miracle. I walked back to my party and brought them up, and attacked this British position and forced them to abandon it.

Since our route was blocked I decided to go back a few hundred yards and took up a defensive position.

The following morning I took the party to a place which was only 500 yards away from the main British artillery position, with the object of making our last charge at them and getting killed. When we reached there we found that we were completely surrounded on all sides by British troops. I then called a meeting of all my men and told them that there were three ways by which we could choose our death. The first, and perhaps the easiest one, was to commit suicide by shooting ourselves. I did not favour this method as it was a cowardly death The second method was to charge into the enemy guns, and either destroy them or get destroyed ourselves. This I explained to my men was glorious death, perhaps the ideal death a soldier could wish for. And the third method was to allow our selves to be captured by the British and to be shot by them. In my own mind I had no doubt whatsoever, what the British would do if they captured me alive. The advantage of this I told my men was that we would probably be taken to India, Court Martialled and then shot. There was a faint ray of hope that we might have an opportunity of telling the full facts about our movement to our countrymen, and then, of course, there was a hope that our graves may be on Indian soil.

I left the final choice to my officers and men. Col Dhillon then spoke. He said we must rule out the first method, that of committing suicide. The second he said, while it was a glorious method of dying would end there. The third one, he said, was the best, firstly because if we had to die, it was better to let the British do the dirty work of shootings, and this he said, "would leave root of hatred

against the British in the minds of our relative and countrymen who may one day feel it their duty to avenge our deaths". He, therefore, favoured the last course and majority supported him.

Consequently, we were captured by the men of an Indian Battalion and taken to the Battalion Head Quarters, where we were treated kindly. We were than taken to the Brigade Divisional Head quarters and eventually to a jail at Pegu

While I was at the British Military Head Quarters several Indian and English officers and other ranks gathered round me One senior British officer talked to me in a very arrogant manner. He asked me certain questions to which I replied in an equally arrogant manner. Here is the exact conversation as it took place :—

B O. ·—What were you fighting for ?

Reply —We were fighting for the Independence of our Country

B. O..—Why did you surrender then ?

Reply —You should not ask me this question, you know the reason very well The British are experts in surrendering. What happened to you at Dunkirk and Singapore

This irritated him very much. He then asked again.

B. O..—What would you do if you were taken to India and released ?

Reply —I will continue the struggle for India's freedom.

B O .—How much pay were the Japanese giving you ?

Reply —The Japanese were not giving me any pay Our Netaji was giving us pay. My pay as a Divisional Commander was Rs 250/- p m, and its actual buying value was equivalent to the price of the chickens

B O ·—Where did your Netaji get his money from ?

Reply —It was donated by Indian Civilians by voluntary contributions.

At this he was infuriated and banging his foot on the ground said, "I hope they will shoot you", and then went away This conversation between us spread like wildfire among the Indian troops who

had been led to believe that the I N A. was a Japanese army. When I was in custody large numbers of them used to come to me to know all about the I. N A and when they were told the full facts about the I. N A they used to feel very sorry and say that they had been misled by British propaganda, and had they known the full facts earlier they would have joined the I N A.

Next day I was taken to the interrogation centre where I stayed for about 20 days. There I was treated very well. The officer commanding was an Irishmen

From Pegu I was sent under escort to Rangoon and then flown to Calcutta, and given in charge of British Military police From Calcutta I was brought to Delhi under an armed escort of 4 Gurkha officers and men This journey was very interesting Before my departure from Calcutta at the police lock up, the officer in charge of my escort was called up and given full instructions He was told, "The person you are escorting is a very dangerous and a great enemy of the British Government If you are slack he will snatch your tommy Gun and shoot you or escape from the compartment If he escapes, you will be either shoot or imprisoned So, be on the alert and shoot on the least suspicion "

The Gurkha officer then sprang to attention and said that he would do exactly as he had been told. I was then taken in a closed van to the station and there I was put in a first class compartment reserved for us. Outside the compartment written in big block letters was, "Dangerous Prisoner. No one allowed in" The Gurkha guard was as alert as they had been asked to be. As soon as the train started I lay down on a separate berth, The Gurkha Subedar then distributed his 3 men so as to form a ring round me He then asked them to load their tommy guns and put the safety catches forward Whenever I happened to move my leg or arm all the 4 guns were turned on me, and I am really surprised why with all this nervousness one of the guns did not go off

This state of affairs continued throughout the first day and night. The following morning after he had carefully studied me, the

subedar came to the conclusion that I was a normal human being During all that time they had not spoken one word to me. The subedar then came to me and asked me who I was and what crime I had committed I told him that I was an officer of the Indian National Army, who had gone to Malaya to fight for the British, but later when the I N A was raised I joined it to fight for India's indepenence

He could not understand this and asked me to explain to him the reasons which had compelled me, who was a well paid officer, to join the I. N A. and fight against the British Sarkar This officer, incidently, had been fighting against my unit in the Chin Hill, and he had his own ideas about the I N A

I asked him if it was a fact that in actual fighting the Indian and Gurkha troops are always in the forefront, and the tommies always in rear He agreed I then asked him if his soldiers, the Gurkhas and the British tommy received the same pay. He replied in the negative, and said that the tommy received at least four times as much pay as an Indian or Gurkha sepoy. I then asked him the reason for this I told him that when it is the question of facing the bullets of the enemy you are in the forefront, why then should the Tommy receive more pay than the Indian sepoy ?

He began to think very hard and in the end, he said, "Sahib, it is an injustice" I explained to him that it was to remove this injustice of an equal pay, rations, pensions, accomodation, travelling facilities, treatment of British officers towards Indian Soldiers, that the I N. A. had fought the British

He again began to ponder deeply and eventually said, "If this was that the I N A fought for, they did very well".

He then asked me, who our Commander-in-Chief was. I showed him a photograph of Netaji. He looked at it with great admiration, and said, "Oh, then even Indians can become Commander-in-chief"

He then opened out his heart to me He said it was the British who were making such indiscrimination between Indian and British

sepoys. He told me that the Americans had raised a Battalion of Burma-born Gurkhas, and that they were paying the same salary to Gurkhas as to their own white soldiers.

On hearing all this his attitude changed immediately. He ordered his men to unload their guns and apologized for his officious behaviour on the previous day.

I have merely mentioned this incident to show how the minds of Indians as a whole, and soldiers in particular had been poisoned against the I. N. A. and how quickly that false propaganda was exposed and its effects nullified

On the evening of the 14th June, 1945, I reached Delhi and was taken straight to the Red Fort. I was interrogated for about one month and then tried by court Martial, the details of which I would not like to repeat as these are well known to the Indian people.

I will now turn to the fate of the other two divisions of the I. N. A. the No. 1. Division which was at Pyinmana and most of the personnal of which were in hospital.

As already stated before, the Regiment was formed out of the remnants of this division and was placed under command of Colonel Thakur Singh The Regiment fought on gallantly until it was overtaken by tanks and armoured columns and all routes of withdrawal were blocked by the enemy. Toungoo and Pegu were occupied. Col Thakur Singh then decided to strike east into the mountains, cross Sittang and reach Papun in Siam Thailand. This trek across huge mountains without any maps or guides and no rations was a most remarkable feet. From Papun our men marched to Moulmein and then to Bangkok.

Most of the soldiers were men of the Subhas Brigade, which had reached Kohima These soldiers had started marching in February 1944, and since then were on the move the whole time. During this period they must have covered over 3,000 miles on foot, on extremely poor rations and without any type of transport. This remarkable trek and the spirit of our soldiers was admired even by our opponents.

While crossing huge tropical mountainis our men were continuously harassed by enemy Guerilla groups. They were also extremely short of rations and had to live on leaves and Jungle grass for several days. They were eventually pursuaded to lay down their will, when the British forces arrived at Bangkok in September 1945. The rest of the No, 1 - Division surrendered at Zeyawadi

NETAJI'S DEPARTURE FROM RANGOON

In about the middle of April 1945, Japanese resistence on the line of Toungoo collapsed very unexpectedly, and the enemy advanced rapidly. The Japanese approached Netaji and asked him to be prepared to have Rangoon. At first he refused to go and told them that he would stay behind at Rangoon and fight to the last.

Eventually, he was pursuaded by all senior officers to go back to Bangkok. The Japanese placed a special plane at his disposal, but he refused to go by air There were a large number of the Rani of Jhansi girls in Rangoon Netaji knew that if he went by plane, they might be left behind. He therefore, told the Japanese that he would not leave Rangoon until all girls of the Rani of Jhansi Regiment were evacuated first. The Japanese promised that they would arrange a railway train for the Rani of Jhansi girls from Rangoon to Waw on the evening of 23rd April. But, unfortunately for us, the train was bombed and the Railway engine destroyed in the afternoon. In the meantime, the enemy was pressing extremely hard and was very close to Pegu, which, if captured, would have meant that no troops could be evacuated to Thailand All the Japanese left Rangoon on 23rd April, but Netaji refused to move until the Rani of Jhansi girls were evacuated first. In this grave situation he was very calm indeed. He looked into every minor detail and himself issued instructions to all commanders.

He made arrangements for sending all the Rani of Jhansi girls who lived in Burma to their homes All those who belonged to Malaya and Thailand, he was taking back with him. Before he left he issued a Special Order of the Day thanking the Burmese people for their help and the co-operation extended to him and to his Government.

Another message he sent to the Indians residing in Burma and to the soldiers of the Azad Hind Fauj, thanking them for their kindness and for great sacrifices they had made. With what wonderful dignity and grace he left Rangoon !

"To my Indian and Burmese friends in Burma !

"Brothers and Sisters ! I am leaving Burma with a very heavy heart. We have lost the first round of our fight for Independence. But we have lost only the first round There are many more rounds to fight. In spite of our losing the first round, I see no reason for losing heart.

"You, my countrymen in Burma, have done your duty to your Motherland in a way that has evoked the admiration of the world You have given liberally your men, money and material. You set the finest example of total mobilisation. But the odds against us were overwhelming and we have temporarily lost the battle in Burma

"The spirit of selfless sacrifice which you have shown, particularly since I shifted my Headquarters to Burma, is something that I shall never forget so long as I live.

"I have the fullest confidence that that spirit can never be crushed. For the sake of India's Freedom, I beseech you to keep up that spirit, I beseech you to hold your heads erect, and wait for that blessed Day when once again you will have an opportunity of waging the War for India's Independence

"When the history of India's Last War of Independence comes to be written, Indians in Burma will have honoured place in that History.

"I do not leave Burma of my own free will I would have preferred to stay on here and shared with you the sorrow of temporary defeat But on the pressing advice of my Ministers and high-ranking officers, I have to leave Burma in order to continue the struggle for India's liberation. Being a born optimist, my unshakable faith in India's early emancipation remains unimpaired and I appeal to you to cherish the same optimism

"I have always said that the darkest hour precedes the dawn.

We are now passing through the darkest hour; therefore, the dawn is not far off. INDIA SHALL BE FREE.

"I cannot conclude this message without publicly acknowledging once again my heartfelt gratitude to the Government and people of Burma for all the help that I have received at their hands in carrying on this struggle. The day will come when free India will repay that debt of gratitude in a generous manner."

* * * * * *

"Brave Officers and Men of the Azad Hind Fauj!

"It is with a heavy heart that I am leaving Burma—the scene of the many heroic battles that you have fought since February 1944, and are still fighting. In Imphal and Burma, we have lost the first round in our Fight for Independence. But it is only the first round. We have many more rounds to fight. I am a born optimist and I shall not admit defeat under any circumstances. Your brave deeds in the battle against the enemy on the plains of Imphal, the hills and jungles of Arakan and the oilfield area and other localities in Burma will live in the history of our struggle for Independence for all time.

"Comrades! At this critical hour I have only one word of command to give you, and that is that if you have to go down temporarily, then go down as heroes, go down upholding the highest code of honour and discipline. The future generation of Indians who will be born, not as slaves but as free men, because of your colossal sacrifice, will bless your names and proudly proclaim to the world that you, their forbearers, fought and lost the battle in Manipur, Assam and Burma, but through temporary failure you paved the way to ultimate success and glory.

"My unshakable faith in India's liberation remains unimpaired. I am leaving in your safe hands your National Tricolour, our National honour, and the best traditions of Indian warrior. I have no doubt whatsoever that you, the vanguard of India's Army of Liberation, will sacrifice everything, even life itself, to uphold India's National honour, so that your comrades who will continue the fight elsewhere may have before them your shining example to inspire them at all time.

"If I had my own way, I would have preferred to stay with you in adversity and shared with you the sorrow of temporary defeat. But on the advice of my Minister and high-ranking officers, I have to leave Burma in order to continue the struggle for emancipation Knowing my countrymen in East Asia and inside India, I can assure you that they will continue the fight under all circumstances and that all your suffering and sacrifices will not be in vain. So far I am concerned, I shall steadfastly adhere to the pledge that I took on the 21st of October, 1943, to do all in my power to serve the interests of 38 crores of my countrymen and fight for their liberation. I appeal to you, in conclusion, to cherish the same optimism as myself and to believe, like myself that the darkest hour always precedes the dawn. India shall be free and before long.

"May God bless you.

"*INQUILAB ZINDABAD* ! *AZAD HIND ZINDABAD* !

JAI HIND !"

(Sd) SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE,

Supreme Commander,

AZAD HIND FAUJ.

Dated: 24th April, 1945.

The following evening, 24th April, his convoy of 15 lorries carrying the Rani of Jhansi girls, and six cars carrying his Headquarter staff, left Rangoon for Bangkok at 2200 hours. 600 men of the "Janbaj" were ordered to march to Bangkok under Major P. S Raturi. All the rest of the troops, totalling approximately 5,000, were left behind in Rangoon under the command of Major General A D Loganathan The duty alloted to these men was to look after and protect the life, honour and property of Indian Civilians residing in Rangoon. This was considered very necessary, owing to the rebellion of the Burmese army and withdrawal of all Japanese military and police forces There was no law and order in Rangoon. On such occasions, it is the habit of Burmese dacoits to loot and rape Indian civilians It was to prevent this that Netaji left behind a powerful force of the I N. A in Rangoon to maintain law and order.

This duty our men carried out very creditably, specially units commanded by Lt Col Jiwan Singh, and won the everlasting gratitude of the Burmese and Indian civilians alike

On the morning of the 25th April, at about 0600 hours, his convoy reached a small village north of Pegu on the Rangoon-Moulmein road It was a very hazardous night journey that Netaji had gone through All the Japanese had gone and Burmese Guerrillas were most active on this road and were shooting up all transport. Fortunately Netaji's convoy got through without mishap. He always seemed to have plenty of luck On the following day the British occupied Pegu. Had he not gone through that night he would probably have been either killed or captured there.

The rest of this eventful journey is described vividly in the diary of the Commander of the Rani of Jhansi detachment, Lieut. Miss Janaki Thevers It reads :

25th April On the previous night Netaji had no rest. He personally alloted lorries and seats to every one, and gave instructions for the order of March Throughout our journey he has been checking up all the lorries in the convoy Today he is up again early in the morning, alloting dispersal areas to the lorries, and to all the troops He is wonderful He goes into every minor detail himself Having done this Netaji went for a cup of tea Through sleeplessness his eyes are red but he looks quite fit. After this Netaji sends food to all areas and then personally visited each area He is very reckless today Numerous enemy fighting planes are hovering above us, but he does not seem to take notice of them. I am accompanying Netaji wherever he goes... I must look after him ..We reach Col Mallick's area, where Netaji sits down to have a little rest, then starts shaving . suddently three enemy fighter planes arrived and started circling above the trees under which we were resting All of us took cover Netaji continued to shave and refused to enter the trench Luckily the planes did not spot us and went away without firing at us After this Netaji decided to visit another area where our girls were resting. As we were going through the open paddy fields,

six enemy fighter planes arrived. I told Netaji to be down and take cover, but unfortunately there was no cover. I was terribly nervous, not on account of the fear of enemy planes, but because of Netaji's safety On seeing the enemy planes Netaji sat down, lighted a cigarette and started smoking The planes missed us, why is it that he is always having miraculous escapes ? .I think he is charmed against danger Nothing can happen to our Netaji until India is free It is nearly 4 p m now Netaji had a little-rest when he woke up, he took out a map and studied it carefully. He called up a staff officer and ordered him to send a motor cyclist to meet the Janbaz unit and to warn them to leave the road and come by the Railway line, as there was danger of enemy tanks breaking through This order comes just in time I heard from Col Ratun that a few minutes after they had left the road, enemy tanks came charging down it Our men had just been saved Did Netaji have a premonition? At about 6 p m we received orders to prepare to move Netaji is going from place to place

It is raining very heavily. He is thoroughly drenched At last our convoy is on the road. There are hundreds of other Japanese lorries, all racing to Waw to get across the Sittang river before being caught up by British tanks The road is in a terrible condition .. Netaji's car skidded and went into a ditch about 8 feet deep, but thank God, he is unhurt . We have to leave that car there

26th April At last we reached Waw at about 2 a.m on 26th April. There is no Bridge over the Waw river, we have to cross it by ferries. The Japanese are using all the ferries themselves. We have one ferry allotted to us . The Japanese General Isoda, who is attached to Netaji's staff, came and suggested to Netaji to cross over first, the rest he said would follow afterwards Netaji told him, "Go to Hell, I will not cross over till all the girls have gone across first", was Netaji's reply Col Mallick and Major Swami went and reconnoitred the river They found that at one place it was only 6 feet deep I ordered all the girls to march to that place and swim across They did so carrying their rifles with them ..Netaji is directing ferrying of lorries across the river All the girls are across the

river, although some of them were nearly drowned, but thanks to Col. Mallick's height, he saved them It is nearly day light now... we are getting very worried about Netaji. He is still on the other side of the river Enemy planes are expected any moment. At last Netaji has come by the last ferry. He has been working throughout the night and has managed to get across six lorries Others must remain on the other side of the river for the day, because no movement, net even of individuals, is possible during daytime owing to enemy planes. Netaji has left full instructions with the officer incharge of the convoy

26th April. We have prepared some tea for Netaji When he arrived we asked him to have a little rest and a cup of tea, but for Netaji there is no rest He had a very hurried cup of tea and went personally to see that all the lorries are properly concealed and comouflaged. Today Netaji again allotted dispersal areas to all units. He is indefatigable Rani of Jhansi have been allotted a small village where they will spend the day. This village is situated very near the river and it looks very dangerous Enemy planes are sure to search it There are no trenches either. All the villagers have deserted. Anyhow, we have to take our chance, luckily there are plenty ot trees in the village. We can take shelter under these, as long as the planes do not spot us we may be saved At about 3 p m Six British fighter planes arrived and started hovering over our area. We all took shelter behind tree trunks General Chatterji tried to make Netaji take cover in a small shell hole, on this Netaji became very angry He told Gen. Chatterji "How can I get inside a trench when the girls have no shelter?" Netaji just kept standing and smoking a cigarette Netaji's cool and calm manner under most adverse conditions inspires all of us Enemy planes attacked our area for half an hour. Five of our lorries were burnt We have very little transport left with us It was a terrible machine gunning that we experienced today Bullets were whizzing past our heads. It was just a miracle how Netaji, inspite of not taking any cover, could escape without even a scratch

27th April: Our convoy started off soon after midnight but unfortunately we could not make much progress as, due to heavy rain and mud, all our transport got stuck in the mud Netaji left the convoy incharge of Col Chopra and with the Rani of Jhansi he marched off on foot to cover the last 10 miles to the Sittang river. The enemy, we are told, is hot on our heels. Once we get across the Sittang river we will be safe for the time being Powerful Japanese forces are taking up defensive position on the East bank of the river. We crossed the river just before day break our convoy also arrived at Sittang ferry early in the morning. Today Netaji's headquarters were again bombed and machine gunned, and Lt Nazir Ahmed, who was taking cover in a trench next to Netaji, was killed

We could only get one lorry and Netaji's car across the ferry, all the rest have been abondoned. There are thousands of Japanese lorries that have been left there too. Enemy planes are burning all these.

"From now on we have to march on foot Roads are nearby knee deep in mud which is being continuously churned up by heavy traffic. My girls are wonderful, each one of them is carrying her own pack, containing all their belongings, rations and ration looking tins, rifles, ammunition and hand grenades We are taking no chances, there are plenty of enemy guerrilla troops in the area, we are prepared to fight them any time. Each girl is carrying as much as 35 lbs in her pack Netaji is marching at the head of the column, also carrying his own pack. We marched throughout that night and covered 10 miles

"*28th. April* In the morning we reached a village and took cover there for the day The Janbaz unit has also arrived We are now nearly 1000 strong In the evening we marched again and covered 15 miles at night Going is very heavy indeed, we are becoming night birds, we do all our marching at night and rest during the daytime, and thanks to the excellent night training given by our instructors we now feel no inconvenience in marching at night.

29th April Today as we were resting, I asked Netaji to

take off his heavy boots to give rest to his feet and to give me his socks for washing As he took off his boots and sock, I was shocked to see that his feet were a mass of blisters. Netaji's car is following us, but he never thinks of using it, we all pursuaded him to go by car, but he would not hear of it In the evening we start marching again. Netaji, as usual, is at the Head of the column and inspite of his blisters we again covered 15 miles tonight The Japanese General accompanying Netaji requested him to go by car. Netaji refused All the Japanese then got into their cars and drove off to Moulmein. Tonight we had to cross several streams by ferries. The Janbaz unit could not cross over today. They are on the far side of Bilin Netaji has decided to wait for them. In the evening Gen. Isoda of the Liaison department returned from Moulmein with some lorries and told Netaji that he and the Rani of Jhansi should go by motor lorries and the Janbaz unit would follow on foot.

Netaji was anneyed with the Japanese. He feels that they are trying to bluff him, and once he leaves any troops behind they might find themselves in difficulties, especially in crossing ferries under Japanese control. There are thousands of Japanese also retreating with us, and it is only because Netaji is with us that we have a priority in crossing over.

"The Japanese General again approached Netaji and requested him to go by car

"Netaji was furious, he turned round to him and said, "Do you think I am Ba Maw of Burma that I will leave my men and run for safety I have told you repeatedly that I will not go unless my men have gone ahead" On this the Japanese General quitely walked away. Poor Devils, they hate walking, but they too, have to walk when Netaji is walking That night we walked on the 30th April another 15 miles and on the morning of 30th. April we reached a small village on the out skirts of Moulmein.

"*1st May.* On the following morning we arrived in Moulmein. During the last six days that we have been on the move, Netaji has hardly slept for more than two hours a day. We were marching at



Mr. Parmanand
Minister of Supplies



Maj-Gen. M. Z. Kiani



Capt MANSUKH LAL
Sardar-e-Jung
who inspite of the 13 wounds succeeded in capturing a post from the British



MAJ. GEN
A.D. LOGANATHAN

night and by day everyone except Netaji rested. He spent the whole day looking after our comfort.

"On arrival in Moulmein, there is no rest for Netaji, he is working like one inspired. He is arranging for our food and accomodation. It was excellent food after six days of semi-starvation, but we were so tired that none of us could eat anything.

"Tonight, 1/2 May, Netaji has arranged for all girls to be evacuated by train from Moulmein to Bangkok. He has detailed General Chatterji and Col. S. A. Mallick to accompany us.

"He himself is staying behind in Moulmein to arrange for the transportation of the Janbaz Unit. We are allotted a few good wagons and are packed in those like sardines, anyhow it is better than marching in mud. Our train left Moulmein late at night.

"*2nd May* · At about 1 a. m after covering approximately 20 miles our train halted and we were told that a bridge had been blown up by American Bombers. They are a terrible nuisance. It is with the sheer weight of metal that they are winning this war. General Chatterji has gone to talk to some Japanese to obtain more information. He returned after a tedious business to extract any type of information from the Japanese. They do not understand our language and we do not understand their's. Our Japanese interpreter has been left behind with Netaji at Moulmein. I understand that we have to march another sixteen miles to reach the next Railway station. We started off at about 2 a. m. On the way Col Mallick managed to hire three bullock carts. He is such a resourceful officer. We put all our packs on bullock carts. It is such a relief. My shoulders are aching, the leather straps have cut into my shoulders, without the pack we can march any distance We marched all night and in the morning reached the railway station.

"*3rd May* : We spent the day in the vicinity of the station. British and American planes seem to be everywhere Even this little station they did not spare, but the Japanese are very clever too. Long before day-break they disengaged all the wagons from the railway engines from each other and dispersed them one by one all over

the railway lines, so as to appear damaged by enemy planes.

"They are extremely short of rolling-stock particularly railway engines They have commandeered, almost all the railway engine from Malaya and Siam. They hide their railway engines with great care.

"In some places they have made tunnels in mountains for hiding them In other places they have constructed bamboo shelters over the railway line. There are several of these shelters and the railway engine is always being changed from one to the other. These bamboo shelters are very well comouflaged and from top they appear as if there is no tunnel, they resemble railway lines, but inspite of this British planes always seem to spot and destory them

"On the evening of the 3rd of May, we entrained again and before we reached Bangkok 3 days later we had to go through several such transhipments, as the railway line and bridges were very badly smashed up by enemy bombers On our way we were visited twice by Netaji He is travelling by car, and is constantly in touch with the Janbaz Unit and with us We reached Bangkok on the morning of the 7th May Netaji had arrived the day before us, and had already made excellent arrangements for our accomodation, clothing, rations, milk and fruit. The following day "Janbaz" units also arrived. They had to march very long distances In fact, they have been on the march since early January 1944. They are mostly men of 1st Battalion of the Subhas Brigade, which had operated under Major P S Raturi, in the Kaladan Valley. Most of them are suffering from Malaria and are very weak Within a very brief space of time through excellent food we are all fit again.

"*20th May* . We have received information that one thousand men of the 'X' Regiment, under the command of Col Thakur Singh, are making their way across huge mountains and virgin forests to Bangkok via Papun and Moulmein. We had not expected this as the enemy tank columns had broken through and had overtaken the 'X' Regiment in the area of Pyinmana But, our men had achieved what appeared the impossible to most soldiers. There was no accomodation or any arrangement for their rations. For four days Netaji worked

day and night nearly 20 hours a day hiring houses, visiting each area, alloting accomodation within those four days with the cooperation of the Indian Independence League and through the strenuous efforts of Netaji's staff, officers camps were in good order to accomodate the "X" Regiment

"*27th May* The "X" Regiment has arrived They are in a terrible condition—almost semi-starved They have had to march over 1,000 miles to meet Netaji Since they left Pyinmana early in March they had been on the move the whole time Netaji had made excellent arrangements for their clothing and feeding Every man and woman of the force that arrived from Burma is getting a pound of milk and fresh fruits daily, men are regaining their strength very rapidly.

"Early in June Netaji left Bangkok for Malaya on a tour of inspection of the No 3 Division which was under the command of Col. G R Nagar Soon afterwards rumours were heard that the Japanese were negotiating terms of surrender On August the 11th, news of the official surrender of the Japanese was announced to the world."

During this period June to August 1945, Netaji was occupied with an extensive inspection tour of all I N. A units which were dispersed throughout Malaya. In July they celebrated Netaji week throughout Malaya and Siam. During this week to commemorate the heroic deeds of the Azad Hind Fauj Netaji laid the foundation stone of the war memorial to the "Shaheeds" of the Azad Hind Fauj. This magnificient memorial was completed late in August 1945 Col C J Stracey, who was a Staff Officer to Major-General M. Z Kiani, worked day and night over this memorial and it was chiefly due to his efforts that this memorial was completed before the British forces bombed in Singapore As is well known to every one the British who claim to be guardians of modern civilisation, put dynamite under this sacred memorial to the martyrs of the Azad Hind Fauj and blasted it. They were frightened that the loyalty of the soldiers of the British India Army would be affected by this Their intention was

to eliminate even the memory of those people who have sacrificed their lives so generously for the cause of Indian Independence. They realised that the memorial was a monument, the very sight of which would shatter the false propaganda which the British had created in the minds of the British Indian Soldiers. But the memories of those "Shaheds" were not to be forgotten by the Indians so easily. The Azad Hind Fauj was under detention, but the local civilians went and placed every day fresh wreaths of flowers on the heap of brick and mortor which had once been the glorious momorial to the Azad Hind Fauj. The British posted sentries over it to stop people doing this. Still the practice continued. Indian sentries had not the heart to stop people from doing this. Many of them were punished and sentenced to long terms of imprisonment. When Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru visited Malaya in April 1946 he also went to pay homage to the martyrs of the Azad Hind Fauj and placed a floral wreath on the spot where the memorial had stood. He was accompanied by the British Commander-in-Chief, Lord Louis Mountbatten and it is believed he also paid homage to this memorial . . . What a hypocrisy!

At about the same time when Simla negotiations were going on Netaji broadcast several times his views on Lord Wavell's offer.

On June 18, 1945, he broadcast:

"Sisters and brothers! I listened with great attention to the speech which the Viceroy of India, Lord Wavell, broadcast on June 14, from New Delhi conveying the offer of the British Government to India. That was the offer to bring which Lord Wavell made a long pilgrimage to London.

"At such a juncture it would neither be untimely nor out of place to inform my countrymen at home as to how Indians in East Asia have reacted to the British Government's offer. First of all we found out, as the Viceroy has himself confessed, that the only motive of the British Government is to mobilise India's support in the war against Japan. The British people are war-weary and after the termination of the war in Europe they badly need rest, and as such, they want others to fight their battles while they themselves reap the

fruits of victory. But the British Indian troops, too, are war-weary, and after the recent successes of the Anglo-Americans in Burma they also desire rest and relaxation. It is, therefore, vital for the British to make the Indian people pour out their money and shed their blood for the preservation of the British Empire. While the fighting was going on inside India and along the Indo-Burma border the British could bluff the British Indian Army with the preaching that it was their duty to fight for the defence of India. The British could also bluff them later on by preaching that the Burma campaign was merely a continuation of the campaign for the defence of India.

"But now that the British want India's blood and money for campaigns beyond Burma and for the campaigns in the Pacific, a new scheme must be found in order to obtain India's support for such campaigns. That is why the British Government has now put forward this new offer which is in reality Sir Stafford Cripps' old offer in a slightly altered garb.

"In deciding what reply we Indians should give, we will have to consider what we stand to gain by fighting Britain's, war against Japan It is one thing for Britain to forcibly exploit India for her war of aggression but it is quite a different thing for Indian nationalists to voluntarily fight Britain's war. To co-operate in Britain's war effort at this stage will mean that we have completely nullified our moral struggle against the British. It will mean political suicide on the part of the Indian National Congress and for us Indians as well.

At an earlier stage of the war British propagandists and their Indian trumpeteers could possibly bluff and bamboozle the Indian people that India's defence was at stake as the Japanese were then knocking at India's gates. But now with the change in the war situation in East Asia, no Indian can have the slightest interest in fighting Britain's war against Japan It is, therefore, crystal clear that any acceptance of Lord Wavell's offer will be tantamount to a voluntary shedding of precious Indian blood and draining our resources in fighting Britain's imperialistic war. But what would India gain in return? Nothing except a few jobs on Viceroy's Executive Council.

"We cannot even argue that by accepting the offer we shall be reaching the 'goal of self-Government', which Lord Wavell and the British Government want us to believe. India does not care any longer for self-government within the British Empire, and India will never be content with anything less than complete independence. But even if any Indian is prepared to accept self-government he would have a much better chance of achieving that objective by continuing the resistance now then by accepting the present offer. The moment we accept the offer it will be inferred by the British Government that we are prepared to compromise by taking something very much less than even self-government. I have no doubt in my mind that the acceptance of this offer will seriously jeopardize all chances of securing even self-government in future, not to speak of complete independence. In short, by accepting the offer we shall gain nothing but we shall lose a lot, and it is Britain that will profit by our lack of strength.

"Under normal circumstances there would not be even a ten to one chance for any Indian nationalist to be enamoured of the present offer, but the British are cunning politicians and they have chosen the proper psychological moment for aiming this offer at India. British politicians are hoping that the Indian people are now overawed by recent Anglo-American victories. The Indian people may, therefore, feel that we stand no chance of achieving independence during the course of the present war and might as well make the best of a bad bargain and take whatever is being offered by the British. This is going to be the attitude of pessimists and moderate politicians like Sri Rajagopalachariar, but this attitude is entirely mistaken and unjustified, and will inevitably result in putting back the clock of freedom by many years.

"I shall refer to the merits of the British proposal. On close and careful analysis it will be found that the present proposal is in essence and in substance identical with that of Sir Stafford Cripps', offered to us in 1942. Three more seats on the Viceroy's Executive Council have been offered to us this time, for example, those of

Home, Finance and External Affairs, for these and other portfolios the persons will be appointed by the Viceroy and will be responsible to him and not to the representatives of the people On the other hand, the most important portfolio, that of the War Member, has been reserved for a Britisher namely, the C-in-C. While the present offer is the old offer of Sir Stafford Cripps appearing in a slightly altered form, there are other obnoxious features which render the offer totally unacceptable. In his speech the Viceroy has clearly indicated that he regards the Congress as one among many parties as has been the traditional policy of the British Government This attitude was indignantly repudiated by Mahatma Gandhi at the Round Table Conference in London in 1931 when, as representative of the Congress, he represented the Indian people. If the Congress accepts the offer now it will repudiate once for all what it has consistently maintained, namely, that it represents the people of India, and it will accept what the British Government has repeatedly held, namely, that the Congress is one among many parties in India I cannot, for the slightest moment, imagine how any Indian nationalist can think of accepting this offer.

"There is another mischievous feature in Lord Wavell's offer. He has ordered the release of the member of the Working Committee of the Congress, but has maintained that unless his offer is accepted, all those who participated in the rising of 1942 will have to remain in custody There is, nowhere, mentioned in his speech that even if his offer is accepted, those who were imprisoned in the year 1939 and 1942 will be set free. It is a well established convention in all democratic centuries that a constitutional change is heralded by an amnesty for all political prisoners In the case of India, however, this convention has been given the go-by.

"The British Government has been telling us that no constitutional changes can be introduced during the course of the war though we have seen that throughout the world far reaching political changes are being carried out Here in East Asia we have seen quite a different state of affairs Right in the midst of the war, several inde-

pendent governments have been set up and power has been handed over to people. So, you see that this British plea is completely hollow and it is intended to delay and deny the Indian demand. If Britain really wants to set up a responsible government she should lose no time in declaring India a self-governing nation and hand over power to the people's representatives.

"Sisters and brothers in India! You have suffered long and suffered much from the political persecution and economic exploitation of British capitalism. Let us suffer a little longer. We have to resist British imperialism by all the moral and material means at our disposal, and above all, let us keep the flag of independence flying. By continuing our fight against imperialism, and by refusing to compromise over independence we shall be able to keep burning the question of India's freedom before the bar of world opinion. That is the way to freedom. On the other hand, by accepting the offer we will be humiliating ourselves and losing the moral sympathy of the world.

"It may be that some of you are asking what is the best way for achieving the liberation of India. To that my answer is perfectly clear. Firstly, from outside India we shall carry on the armed struggle for our freedom to the last man and to the last round. Secondly, there are numerous friends of India abroad who advocate our cause before the bar of world opinion and in all international conference. And, lastly, my countrymen, you too must be prepared to launch a revolution at the opportune moment which will spread like the wild fire of the prairies and may even be supported by the British Indian forces.

"Sisters and brothers! In conclusion, I appeal to you not to give up hope. I repeat that the forces that are now working inside India and outside are irresistible. There is no earthly power that can stop the Indian people for achieving their goal of freedom. With patience and determination we shall achieve our goal. The Viceroy has asked for your goodwill and co-operation. Tell him that your goodwill and co-operation has been reserved for India's struggle for liberty and for none else."

On June 19, 1945 he broadcast:

"Sisters and brothers in India! Yesterday I spoke in a general way about Lord Wavell's offer and what our reaction to it should be. Today I want to speak to you again on the same subject.

"British and American news agencies have been giving detailed reports of the daily developments inside India. With the help of these reports it is possible to form a correct picture of what is going on inside our country. I would, beg you to consider first of all what the inevitable results of accepting Wavell's offer will be, because the Congress leaders will have to take the responsibility of sending at least half-a-million Indian troops to fight Britain's imperialist war, not on the Indo-Burma border of inside Burma, but in the regions beyond Burma and the Pacific. With all due respect I would like to ask Mahatma Gandhi, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and other leaders whether they will take the responsibility of fighting Britain's imperialistic war in the Far East and of sacrificing half-a-million Indian lives for the same.

"There are definite reasons as to why the British Government is unable to obtain from Britain itself the necessary fighting men needed for the future campaigns in the Far East. First of all, the British have suffered tremendous losses during the war on many fronts over a a period of five years and nine months. As a result, the British people are war-weary and British troops are not willing to face another long campaign which will have to be fought under conditions much harder than in Europe. Secondly, unlike the First World War, this war has well nigh brought about the financial bankruptcy of Britain. Owing to the pressure of war and the colossal demand for war material British industries had to switch over almost entirely to war production. This was not the case with American industries. The result was that during the war Britain has been fast losing her pre-war markets and these markets were steadily going into the hands of American industry If this process goes on for a long time during this war then Britain, in spite of an Allied victory, will lose the greater portion of her pre-war foreign trade and will be economically ruined. Owing

to this reason British leaders find it imperative to release their factory workers from the fighting forces and war services as soon as possible and thereby restart peace-time industries. It is absolutely impossible for British to do both things at the same time, namely, to fight another long campaign in the Far East and to restart her peace-time industries.

"I have no doubt in my mind that under normal circumstances nobody belonging to the Congress would have even looked at Lord Wavell's offer. In order to give their consideration to that offer Congress men will have to give a go-by to the fundamental principles and beliefs of the Indian National Congress. The Congress stands for complete independence. Lord Wavell's offer, as has been rightly pointed out by Mahatma Gandhi, does not even mention the word "independence." Secondly, the Congress stands for non-participation in and resistance to Britain's imperialist war. Thirdly, the Congress is still pledged to the 'Quit India' resolution adopted three years ago, and the national slogan for the Indian people since then has been 'Do or Die' in the fight for India's freedom. No Congressman can, consistent with his principles, therefore look at Lord Wavell's offer not to speak of giving consideration to it. Nevertheless, the fact that so many Congressmen and leaders are actually considering the British offer it is because a wave of defeatism has swept over India since the Anglo-American successes in Europe and in Burma. In a fit of pessimism and defeatism some Congressmen are forgetting their life-long principles and are now reconsidering the offer which they rejected in 1942.

"What I want to tell my countrymen at home clearly and frankly is that the pessimism and defeatism which seems to have overtaken them is altogether unjustified Whether one considers the international political situationor war situation, there is no cause for pessimism or despondency. The war in East Asia, whatever its ultimate result may be, is going to be a long and bitter one. The whole world knows that there is no real unity in the camp of the so-called United Nations. The war aims of Soviet Russia are quite different from those of the Anglo-American Powers and the conflict between the Soviet and the Anglo-

American is growing from day to day Both sides have of late been trying to patch up their differences in Europe, but that is because they are preparing for a showdown in the Far East Since the collapse of Germany in Europe Soviet Russia has been taking an increasing interest in the affairs of Asia. Had it not been for this, M Molotov, the Soviet Foreign Minister, would not have declared at San Francisco that the day was not far off when the voice of Free India will be heard in the world.

"While the war in the East will be going on, surprising developments are bound to take place in the domain of international affairs. Some of these developments will not be favourable to our enemies, and they will afford India further opportunities for achieving her independence. Syria and the Lebanon, in spite of the Allied victory in Europe, are fully utilizing the international situation for achieving their independence. By using England and the United States of America against French imperialism, Syria and the Lebanon are setting an example to India as to how India can utilize the present international situation for winning her freedom. There is no doubt that if today Syria and the Lebanon are using Britain and America against France, the day is not far off when other Arab States will use other friendly powers against Britain British politicians realize this, and they realize also that India will utilize the support of friendly Powers for winning her independence, and some of these friendly Powers may come from inside the camp of the United Nations During the course of this war India has become a live issue in world politics, and there is no doubt that in all international conferences in future the Indian issue will be raised. British politicians, therefore, want to prevent India remaining an international issue any longer, and want to convert India into a domestic issue of the British Empire Let us not forget that the moment there is a compromise between nationalist India and Britain, India will become a domestic issue of the Britain Empire, and it will then be impossible for foreign Powers such as Soviet Russia to intervene on behalf of Indian independence.

"In spite of the recent military successes of our enemies, India

has been making rapid progress towards her goal of independence. In addition to what the Indian people have been doing at home, two distinct forces have been working for India's independence. Firstly those who have been *fighting with arms against India's enemies*, and secondly, those who have been advocating India's independence before the bar of world opinion. Those who have hitherto been fighting with arms against India's enemies shall go on fighting in future. So far as the Indian National Army is concerned, it will go on fighting to the last man and to the last round. Similarly, those who have made India an international issue and who have been advocating on India's behalf before the world will also go on doing so. The forces working outside India, coupled with the resistance inside India, are irresistible If you, my countrymen at home, cannot fight British imperialism with arms, then at least keep up moral resistance to our enemy by refusing to compromise with him or to fight his imperialist war.

"In this connection, I want to make an honest appeal to Mahatma Gandhi, to the President and members of the Congress Working Committee, and to the millions of Congressmen and Congress women who stand behind them that they should not judge the international situation wrongly at this critical moment. A mistake in appearing the international situation is likely to lead to a wrong step in Indian politics India is not beaten. We have not fallen yet The present international situation is not unfavourable to us. On the contrary, it is much to our advantage and will become more so in the days to come. Why then should we think of a compromise now, why then should we accept the offer which we deliberately rejected three years ago?

"I speak now as an ordinary member of the Congress, who throughout his whole public life has faithfully served the Congress and the cause of India's independence. Even if you, my sisters and brothers at home, feel that our allies will be ultimately defeated and that the Anglo-Americans will ultimately emerge triumphant, there is still no reason to despair so far as India is concerned. No matter

what happens in world politics in future, India is bound to win. India's star is definitely in the ascendent. Do not try to drag it down by a wrong step at this juncture We have suffered long and have suffered much Let us suffer a little more a little longer. But, by all means let us stick to our guns till the end of this war. Sisters and brothers at home, don't you understand why Lord Wavell is in such a beastly hurry? Don't you understand why he has rejected the suggestion of Mr Jinnah to postpone the Simla Conference? To us outside India the matter is very simple and very clear. The general election in Britain takes place on July 5. The Conservative Party wants to prevent India becoming an election issue. That is why Wavell's offer was flung upon us one month before the general elections in England. Nobody knows what the result of the general election may be. But everybody knows that whether the Labour Party gets a clear majority or not, it will, in any case, emerge much stronger in Parliament after July 5. The Conservative Party is afraid that if the Labour Party comes to power and if in the meantime the Indian problem is not settled, the Labour Party is bound to make another attempt to solve the Indian question. Personally, I do not believe in bargaining, because, for me there can be no compromise over India's independence But if you are keen on bargaining, and if you are determined to compromise over India's independence, then I beg you not to commit yourselves before July 5. I do not know what was in the mind of Mr. Jinnah when he asked for the postponement of the Simla Conference, but if he intended to avoid playing his trump card before July 5, then I must express my admiration for his political sagacity and farsightedness I can make a clear prediction that Lord Wavell will move heaven and earth to arrive at a decision before July 5, If he succeeds, it will be a feather in the cap of the Conservative Party and will help considerably to swell the votes of the Conservative Party's candidates at the election Moreover, if Lord Wavell succeeds in arriving at an agreement with the Congress before July 5, and if thereafter the Labour Party comes to power, then the Conservative Party will be able to prevent the

Labour Cabinet reopening the Indian issue.

"It is not my intention to say that I believe in bargaining with the Labour Party. Far from it. My own plan is clear, and that is to go on fighting with the Azad Hind Fauj to the last man and to the last drop of our blood But if you are not prepared to go that way because you regard it as a perilous adventure, and if you are determined on bargaining with the British Government, then I should say that the time for bargaining is after July 5. If you do not come to an agreement with Lord Wavell before July 5, then you will help to swell the votes of the Labour Party's candidates at the general elections We won't forget that both the Cripps offer and the Wavell offer have been made under the auspices of a predominantly Tory Cabinet. The Labour Party has, on both occassions, been a minority party, and the initiative and responsibility did not rest with the Labour leaders If lord Wavell fails in his endeavour, it is inevitable that the British public would like to give the Labour Cabinet another chance to tackle the Indian issue. Therefore, to sum up, if you believe in bargaining, then break with Lord Wavell and reject his offer. It will undoubtedly aid the Labour Party to come into office After that the Labour Party will certainly take the initiative in reopening the Indian issue, hoping that it will succeed where the Conservative Party had failed Remember, my conviction is that if there is any other Cabinet after July 5, that Cabinet will consider it as a matter of duty and necessity to solve a problem which has remained unsolved for a long time Therefore, with the Labour Cabinet you can strike a bargain which will be much more advantageous to India than a bargain with Lord Wavell dictated by the Conservatives.

"Sisters and brothers at home! I shall address you again tomorrow at about this time Today before I close, I should like to say one thing more You are now violently condemning the Viceroy and you are criticizing him for giving an equal number of seats in the Executive Council to caste Hindus and to Muslims But why don't you go deeper into the question and find out the idea behind it? So

far not one single Indian leader has done so, judging from the reports that are now before me. I regret that the members of the Hindu Mahasabha have taken what appears to be their own peculiar line. Our objection should not be to Muslims getting a majority of seats on the Executive Council The moot question is what type of Muslims come into the Executive Council? If we have Muslims of the type of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Asaf Ali and Rafi Ahmed Kidwai the destiny of India will be safe And I personally believe that it is only right to give all the freedom to such patriots. There is no difference between a patriotic Muslim and a patriotic Hindu. The British intention in the present case is to give all the Muslim seats to the nominees of the Muslim League. Seats reserved for the caste Hindus should all be given to the Congress For the remaining seats the Viceroy will appoint his own nominee, who will act according to the Viceroy's directions.

"Consequently, with the Muslim League acting in full co-operation with the British Government, the Congress Party in the Executive Council will become a permanent minority. Thus, by a clever stratagem the Viceroy will not only continue to rule India arbitrarily as he has done until now, but he will continue to do so in future with the help of the Congress

"Now the question arises as to whether the Muslim League members in the Executive Council will co-operate with the Viceroy Personally, I am absolutely certain that they will do so because the Viceroy has agreed to give them a weightage in his Executive Council. If the Muslim League co-operates with the British Government in its war effort, then the British purpose of exploiting Indian manpower and resources for fighting Britain's imperialist war will be easily fulfilled

"I have no doubt in my mind that in the offer of Lord Wavell there is a secret understanding, either explicit or implicit, between the Muslim League and the British Government. But it is Mr Jinnah and his colleagues who will outwit Wavell In the Executive Council the Muslim League Party will carry out Britain's war policy in order to realize their plan of Pakistan as a reward for the Muslim

League's co-operation in Britain's war effort. The Congress Party, if it accepts this offer, will become a permanent minority in the Executive Council. Nevertheless, she will have to carry out Britain's war policy as part of the compromise. After co-operation of the Congress has been secured by the British Government through this clever stratagem the British will try to get the Congress to agree to bring about the vivisection of India, namely, Pakistan. In the meantime the Congress will have committed political suicide by accepting a position in which it will have admitted that it is not the representative of the Indian people, but only one party among several parties in India.

"In conclusion, I want to say that though I do not agree with the line of approach of the members of the Hindu Mahasabha and of the anti-Pakistan front, I feel very strongly that they have done a great service to India by giving an outspoken expression of their opposition to Lord Wavell's plan. In fact, I should go one step further and say that at this critical juncture it is the duty of all right-thinking and patriotic Indians, particularly of all progressive Congressmen, to start a raging and tearing campaign all over the country against Lord Wavell's offer. Mahatma Gandhi has always been responsive to public opinion as a leader should be. By declining to represent the Congress officially at the Simla Conference, he has done the right thing and he kept himself free to adopt the line which he thinks is right and in accordance with the wishes of the people and in the true interests of India. I have no doubt in my mind that public opinion, and in particular, the opinion among the rank and file of the Congress, should oppose this plan without delay. Mahatma Gandhi will not fail to take notice of it and he will then advice the Congress to reject the unwanted offer. Sisters and brothers, the destiny of India now lies in your hands, be up doing and see to it that Lord Wavell's offer goes the same way as the Cripps offer of 1942.

On June 20, 1945, Netaji broadcast:

"Sisters and brothers in India! I am going to speak to you today as I would have done if I had been with you at this critical

juncture. I shall speak to you as one who has been with the Congress and has served the Congress with loyalty and devotion since 1921, through fair weather and foul. You remember very well, I hope, what political developments took place in India after September 1939 when the war broke out in Europe At that time the British Government wanted to use the Congress Ministries in the Provinces for the prosecution of the war, but the Congress refused to co-operate in the war effort, and for two reasons: firstly, because India's national demand for independence had not been conceded by the British Government, and, secondly, because Britain's war was an imperialist war, in which India had no interest. At that time there was no question of Congress Ministries Since the Congress decided not to co-operate in Britain's war in 1939, the Congress Ministries resigned, although it was very clear to every Congressman that if these Ministries had remained in office they could have done a lot of good to the Indian people in other matters. After the resignation of the Congress Ministries the Congress gradually once again resumed the fight for freedom The climax came in 1942 when the 'Quit India' Resolution was passed, and when the people were given a new slogan in their renewed struggle for liberty; the slogan of 'Do or Die'

"Now in the year of grace 1945, we are confronted with Lord Wavell's offer. We are told that if the Congress agrees on whole-hearted participation in the coming campaign in the Far East, then the Congress can get two things now plus a promise of self-government for the future These two things are · firstly, some jobs on the Viceroy's Executive Council, and, secondly, the restoration of the Congress Ministries in the Provinces

"From the reports coming from India, it appears that some Congressmen are very favourably disposed towards Lord Wavell's offer, which means that they are satisfied with the promise of self-government, not independence mind you, provided the Congress Ministries in the Provinces are restored and a few jobs in the Viceroy's Executive Council are made available to Congressmen. But all these allur-

ing offers have been before the Congress for a long time. First of all, the British have all along promised us self-government. Secondly, in the Provinces there were eight Ministries under our control in 1939, and it is we who decided that they should resign Thirdly, jobs in the Viceroy's Executive Council have always been open to Congressmen who were prepared to sell themselves

"There are two new conditions in Lord Wavell's offer. Firstly, the number of jobs on the Viceroy's Executive Council has been increased Secondly there is the explicit condition that acceptance of the offer will mean their pledge of wholehearted participation in the coming campaign in the Far East This was not the case when the Congress Ministries tendered their resignation in 1939. The Congress Ministries, if they had so desired, could have accepted the offer after 1939, without giving a clear pledge of wholehearted participation in Britain's war.

"To those who are now eager to accept Lord Wavell's offer, I should like to put a few questions in order to clarify the issue before us (i) What has happened to our goal of independence, to which there is not even a partial reference in Lord Wavell's offer? (ii) Does *Purna Swaraj* mean only Indianisation of the Viceroy's Council, or does it mean complete independence and a total severance of the British connection? (iii) Why did the Congress Ministries resign in 1939? (iv) What has happened to our slogan, "Do or Die"? (v) Why did we condemn Congressmen like Shri Aney and Dr Khare for accepting jobs on the Viceroy's Executive Council?

Lord Wavell's proposal may best be described, in the words of the late Vithalbhai Patel, as 'Swaraj for the Viceroy,' but not even swaraj for the Executive Council. As to the Department of External Affairs being handed over to an Indian member, I feel that it will prove to be an eye-wash, because the affairs of Indian States, as well as those relating to tribal and frontier affairs, will be outside the jurisdiction of this member. Though there is no question of collective responsibility or majority rule in the new Executive Council and though the Viceroy and Governer-General will remain the same

autocrat as before, he has nevertheless to hide his autocracy in the new Executive Council through an ingenious political device or strategy. This stratagem consists in providing for a permanent majority in the Executive Council which will stand by the Viceroy in all circumtances.

"Sisters and brothers at home! At this critical hour the destiny of India lies in your hands. Now is your time for starting the 'Quit India' campaign all over the country and thereby making it impossible for anyone to arrive at a compromise. 'Jai Hind".

On June 21, 1945, Sri Netaji said :

"Sisters and brothers in India! During the last three days I have been speaking to you from a broader point of view, both national and international, and I have also been considering the Indian problem in its proper setting, that is, against the international background.

"I have no doubt in my mind that public opinion in India, and in particular the Congress organization, has moved much further in a revolutionary direction since the beginning of the present war in 1939. Consequently, if a plenary session of the Congress were held today or even a full meeting of an All-India Congress Committee, Lord Wavell's offer would be rejected by an overwhelming majority. The British Government and Lord Wavell know the Indian situation and they realize that if the British offer had been left to the verdict of Congressmen in general or even to the All-India Congress Committee, then there would not be the slightest chance of its acceptence. They have, therefore, created a situation in which only the members of the Congress Working Committee will decide about Lord Wavell's offer on behalf of the Congress According to the Congress constitution, the Working Committee cannot make a final decision on behalf of the Congress on such an all important issue

"I am, however, prepared to admit that if the Congress Working Committee had represented all sections of the Congress or if there had been a real emergency, there might have been some moral, though not legal, justification for the Congress Working Committee to handle this all-important issue on its sole responsibility But it is

well known that the Left Wing of the Congress, which is quite influential, is not represented on the Working Committee at all. And, nobody can maintain that there is such an emergency in the country that the Working Committee is obliged to moke a momentous decision behind the back of the All-India Congress Committee and of the rank and file of the Congress I can understand that the British Government, to achieve its own ends, has manoeuvred in such a way that Lord Wavell's offer has been placed not before the All-India Congress Committee or a plenary session of the Congress, but 'only before the Congress Working Committee, but I cannot understand why members of the Working Committee are walking into the trap cleverly laid by Lord Wavell Apart from the provision of the Congress constitution according to which the Working Committee is a mere executive body and not its deliberative or law-making body, from the purely moral point of view it is wrong and unfair for the Working Committee to dispose of a matter which will affect the entire future of the Congress and India for several decades Even at this late hour I honestly and humbly appeal to Mahatma Gandhi not to make a decision behind the back of the Congress. I make this appeal particularly because by accepting the Wavell offer we shall be receding from the progress already made and nullifying the fundamental principles and resolutions of the Congress, and we shall be undoing the work and sacrifices of the Congress over a long period.

"If Indians at home do not give up resistance to British imperialism, nothing can prevent the attainment of India's independence by the end of this war By a combination of resistance inside India, armed struggle in East Asia and the adoption of a realistic policy in the international field, India will certainly emerge as an independent nation by the time this war ends. But, for the achievement of our liberation internal struggle against the British has to be guranteed. Armed struggle in East Asia I am in a position to guarantee. I can also give this assurance that if resistance to British imperialism is kept up inside India, then India will remain an international issue, and diplomacy in the international field will be able to help our cause considerably. For

the present the British do not have much to worry about trouble inside India, but they are nevertheless afraid of two things. They are afraid that if moral resistance inside India continues India will remain an international issue. They are also afraid that if the Indian people remain hostile to the British, it will be impossible for them to obtain adequate help from India in men and resources for the coming campaign in the Far East. The British know that without India's help in a large measure and in particular without the help of India's manpower they cannot win the war in the Far East Lord Wavell's offer is calculated to kill two birds with one stone. Firstly, the offer is a bait to guarantee India's wholehearted participation in Britain's imperialist war: secondly, it will convert the India issue into a domestic issue of the British Empire and thereby bring about a withdrawal of all help to India by the United Nations including Soviet Russia.

"'Before the members of the Working Committee decide to accept Lord Wavell's offer they should be prepared to sacrifice half-a-million Indian lives for Britain's imperialist war in the Far East. I have envisaged what the Congress stands to lose if it were to accept Lord Wavell's offer Consequently, before deciding to accept the offer, members of the Working Committee will have to calculate carefully what they will gain thereby and whether that gain will compensate in adequate measure what we shall lose It stands to reason that if what we gain is much less than what we lose, we should reject that offer as we rejected Sir Stafford Cripps' offer in 1942. There may be Congressmen who think that what we are thinking of doing now, we shall have to do that in the long run This view is entirely erroneous I have already remarked in a previous talk that even if the worst happens and India fails to obtain her freedom during the course of the present war, then we shall have another opportunity as soon as the present war comes to an end.

"The change-over from war to peace is a period of unrest. During this period of unrest even a victorious power is at a disadvantage because it needs rest and relaxation. That is why the revolutions of Ireland and Turkey after the First World War revolutions, which

failed during the war period, attained complete success after the termination of the war.

"On reading a report which is before me today, I find that the Congress President, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, said; 'If the present negotiatians fail the Congress will wait till the end of the war before launching a further attempt'. I cannot agree with the Congress President that we should not renew the struggle at home while the war is on, but I agree with him that at the end of the war, if India still happens to be enslaved, Indians will again have another opportunity of launching a large-scale offensive against British imperialism, and I have no doubt in my mind that in that post-war campaign the demobilized members of present British-Indian Army will play a very important role.

In the Executive Council the chief position will be held by the British War Member, namely, the Commander-in-chief. What the War Member will demand the Viceroy will certainly endorse. Consequently, next to the Viceroy the War Member will be all-powerful. So long as the Viceroy and the C-in-C act in concert they will be able to control all the departments. The other Executive Councillors will not be able to object because they will be illegally bound by their responsibility to the Viceroy and they will be morally bound by their pledge of wholehearted participation in the war. The Department of External Affairs, which is to be run by an Indian, will prove to be an eye-wash because foreign affairs will be excluded from its jurisdiction. The Member in charge of this Department will become like the Indian Defence Member of the Viceroy's Council who is in charge of Army canteens.

"I have pointed out what we shall lose by accepting the offer. I shall now say something as to what more we shall lose if the Congress co-operates with the British Government for a period of time. Firstly, the independence movement as well as the freedom mentality of the Indian people will suffer a serious setback And, lastly, by compromising with British imperialism the Congress will forfeit the sympathy of freedom-loving men and women all over the world and

will lose the support of those friendly Powers like Soviet Russia who have full sympathy for our cause and willing to lend us active help

"Whatever the other objections to the Viceroy's offer may be, the single objection, namely, the communal implications of it, is enough to condemn that offer and render it totally unacceptable to any nationalist party. The Congress is a national institution representing Indians of all religious faiths and it has fought hard and suffered much to maintain its national character. It will commit veritable suicide if at this stage of its career the Congress were to renounce its national character and accept a communal label. Likewise, it will stultify itself once and for all if it gives up its role as a representative of Indian Nationalism and if it accepts the position of one party among many parties in India

"In conclusion, let me remind once again, as I said yesterday, that in this fateful hour the destiny of India lies in your hands and the responsiblity is exclusively that of the Indian people and not of the Congress Working Committee Therefore, carry on a raging and tearing campaign against this sinister offer and see that this offer is consigned to the scrap-heap before July 5, 1945."

* * * * * *

On June 22, 1945 Netaji broadcast:

"Sisters and brothers in India! Latest news reaching us from India is to the effect that the Congress Working Committe decided last night to accept Lord Wavell's invitation to participate in the Simla Conference To those who are acquainted with the present attitude of the Indian National Congress, this news has not come as a surprise. Referring to the opinion inside the Congress Working Committee, the political correspondent of the Associated Press of India has reported as follows 'The opinion among the Congress leaders about the Viceroy's proposal divides itself into three groups. The first party is led by Mr Gandhi and Sardar Vallabhbhai, who take strong exception to the use of the term 'Caste Hindus' in the Viceroy's broadcast The middle group is led by Mr Nehru and Maulana Azad who, not being satisfied with the quantum of power contemplated to be transferred, take the view that the scheme can be given a fair trial as

an interim measure, provided there is sufficient possibility of advancing India's demand for national independence and to improve the lot of the poor The third group, led by Mr. Rajagopalchari and Mr. Bhulabhai Desai, feel that the terms of reference of the Simla Conferece are so wide and elastic that all fears of the Congress are groundless. They advocate that the Congress should accept the proposal without picking holes in it and give it a fair trial and thus demonstrate the determination of the Congress to get on with the business.

"I cannot judge from this distance if the analysis of the political correspondent of the Associated Press of India is correct or not, but I would not be surprised if it is. In fact this analysis conforms with what I said yesterday about the political character of the present Congress Working Committee It appears that the Radical Democratic Party on this question is not supported by any member of the Congress Working Committee. The argument seems to be that even while agreeing to accept the invitation to the Simla Conference, the Working Committee has not committed itself in any way. But, this argument cannot seriously be accepted because the offer as it stands and the implications of its acceptance are clear. Everybody who attends this Conferece will have to accept the policy of whole-hearted participation in the coming campaign in East Asia, and the Congress will have to repudiate the policy it laid down regarding participation in the war when the Congress Ministries resigned office in 1939. Moreover, everybody attending this Conference will have to accept the present constitutional position of the Viceroy and Governor-General in the Executive Council and will have to accept the humiliating position of functioning as mere advisors and not responsible ministers. Lord Wavell has made no secret of this and in fact he has made it quite clear that it is he who will appoint the members of the Executive Council So, the members of the Executive Council will be responsible not to the Legislature but to him, and there is no question of majority rule or of collective responsibility in the Executive Council. Consequently, everybody who attends the Simla Conference will have to give up the demand for independence. They will have

to give up also the usual demand for a National Government at the Centre, responsible to the Legislature, and will have to be content with Indianization of the Executive Council functioning within the framework of the 1935 Act. Presently, there can be no doubt whatsoever that acceptance of the invitation to the Simla Conference after all this will amount to giving up the fundamental principles and policies of the Indian National Congress, including the 'Quit India' resolution for which so many of our brethren and comrades are still rotting in prisons. Moreover, it is very unfortunate and painful that not a single member of the Congress Working Committee has put forward the demand for the release of all political prisoners, prior to negotiating with the British Government, although many of them have issued statements dealing with certain points in Lord Wavell's offer.

"I said in my talk yesterday that the Working Committee is an executive body and is not constitutionally empowered to decide the destiny of so many million people and to commit the country to a course of action which is contrary to the fundamental ideals and policy of the Congress Since the Working Committee does not represent all sections within the Congress and since there is no agreement on this question inside the country, there is no moral—not to speak of legal—justification for the Working Committee to deliberate on such vital issues behind the back of the All-India Congress Committee and the Congress as a whole There is also no justification for the Working Committee to accept on its own responsibility the invitation to the Simla Conference especially when the whole offer is contrary to the fundamental principles and policy of the Congress

"I beg and implore Mahatma Gandhi and the Working Committee, even at this late hour, to pause and ponder over this great responsibility which they are taking upon themselves by ignoring the All-India Congress Committee and the Congress on such a momentous occasion I fail to understand why the Working Committee should act in such an unfair manner That Lord Wavell and the British Government know that the Indian people are overawed by the recent military successes of the Anglo-Americans and that the Indian people

are at last beginning to realise that the Anglo-Americans are bound to win this war, Lord Wavell and the British Government want to exploit this psychological moment and strike while the iron is hot. They are afraid that after a few months the whole world will realise that despite the collapse of Germany the overthrow of Japan in the Far East is not an easy proposition. Secondly, Lord Wavell and the British Government must somehow bamboozle these leaders and secure at least 500,000 Indian troops and vast quantities of military supplies for Britain's imperialist war in the Far East. Thirdly, Lord Wavell and the British Government must come to some agreement with the Indian leaders before July 5, when the general elections in England will commence. All these three motives afford sufficient explanation as to why Lord Wavell and the British Government are in a beastly hurry. But that is no reason why the Congress Working Committee should fall into their trap. In this connection I would like to repeat what I said previously as to why Lord Wavell is moving heaven and earth in order to come to an agreement with the Indian leaders before July 5.

"Now I want my countrymen to understand that the Conservative Party will do everything possible to prevent the Indian issue being brought up before an international conference. Ultimately, there is no doubt whatsoever that if Lord Wavell's offer is turned down by us, as I hope it will be, there will be another opportunity for bargaining with the British Government after the general elections, no matter which party secure the majority on the 5th of July The fact that a long and bitter campaign in the Far East lies ahead of the British Government is an additional guarantee that British will have to placate India

"I want to make it clear before I proceed further that there is no question of bargaining except that the British quit India. But, since there are so many Indians at home who are thinking in terms of a compromise with British imperialism, it is their duty o consider when and how to make this bargain. On this point I am quite sure, that the best time for bargaining is after July 5, and though there is

very little hope of the Labour Party recognizing India's independence it would be possible to strike a better bargain with that Party. A compromise with the British Government on the issue of Lord Wavell's offer can be justified only on two conditions First, if there had been no chance of winning independence Seconly, if this had been the last chance for arriving at a compromise with the British Government. As to the first condition, I may say that inspite of the recent successes of the Anglo-Americans, India has now a better chance of achieving her independence than ever before As to the second condition, I will repeat that no matter which party in Britain is called upon to form a Cabinet, India will get another chance and a better chance of bargaining with the British Government after July 5.

"In my view there are three factors, the immediate effects of which will help India to win her independence by the end of this war. They are (i) resistance to British imperialism inside India, (ii) armed struggle against the British outside India, and (iii) diplomacy in the international field Even moral resistance inside India will be enough. India must remain an international issue, and our diplomacy in the international fiell should be directed towards mobilising support for Indian independence. India must take the assistance—moral and material—of those nations which are fighting Britain and are, therefore, her enemies So far as armed struggle is concerned, in spite of our recent reverses in Burma the main forces of the Azad Hind Fauj will not give up the struggle We shall continue fighting, and we shall fight to the last man and to the last round We in East Asia can take a much more objective view of the war situation than our countrymen at home, who are easily misled by British propaganda, and have begun to believe in an exaggerated view of the strength of the Anglo-American powers If our countrymen at home believe in our word they should accept our reading of the war situation and change the policy of the Congress in accordance with this.

"Those Congressmen who are thinking of accepting Lord Wavell's offer should look ahead and prepare themselves for the day

when they will have to provide half-a-million Indian troops as cannon-fodder for Britain's imperialist war in East Asia, and they should also be prepared for fighting their own countrymen in the Azad Hind Fauj, who are prepared to fight the British wherever they happen to meet them. Even if these Congressmen are not ashamed to take up arms against their brothers and sisters in the Azad Hind Fauj they should at least refuse to provide half-a-million Indian lives as cannon-fodder for the perpetuation of the British Empire. To those who doubt that India can achieve her independence by the end of this war, I should like to say that India will never get another opportunity like this for fighting for her freedom.

* * * * * *

Netaji broadcast over the Provisional Government of Azad Hind Radio, Singapore, on June 23, 1945.

"Sisters and brothers in India! Yesterday I told you that in any case it is wrong according to the Congress constitution and also morally unfair for the Congress Working Committee, which is an exclusive body, to exceed its powers and make decisions on behalf of the All-India Congress Committee or the Congress. I should have added, it is also unwise and impolitic for the Working Committe to do so. To an outside observer it appears as if the Working Committee was acting with indecent haste. I feel constrained to say that as compared with Mahatma Gandhi and the Working Committee, Mr. Jinnah acted wisely and cautiously. He declared, according to the report before me that he could not advise the representatives of the Muslim League to attend the Simla Conference until after his interview with Lord Wavell on the 24th Whatever Mr. Jinnah's inner motives might have been, he did not show any anxiety to jump at the offer made by Lord Wavell Mr Jinnah took another prudent and cautious step in asking Lord Wavell to postpone the conference.

"I have said that unless Mahatma Gandhi is exceedingly careful he might be outmanoeuvred by the Viceroy and Mr. Jinnah into a position in which the Congress will nominate the members of the Executive Council for only those seats which have been reserved by

the Viceroy for the caste Hindus. In other words there is very danger that Mahatma Gandhi might be manoeuvred into a position in which he will make a hasty admission that the word 'Congress' is synonymous with the word 'Caste Hindus'. That would be the political death of the Indian National Congress, from which it will be impossible for the Congress to retrieve itself.

"This danger could be avoided if the Congress representative to the Simla Conference submit a panel of names concerning all the seats, barring that of the Commander-in-Chief. Will the Congress representatives do so? I am glad to find that the Working Committee has been thinking along these lines. But it is not enough to think. Congress representatives will have to insist that the Viceroy give up altogether the religious and communal basis for the composition of the Executive Council, and adopted a political and national basis instead. We must not forget what the difficulties before us are. I have always been of the view that as in a peace conference, so also in a political round table conference, it is only belligerent, parties who are entitled to participate That the British have now agreed to the partial Indianization of the Executive Council as a stepping stone to other far-reaching changes is not because of Mr. Jinnah and the Muslim League, but because of the Congress which has consistently fought the British Government with all the means at its disposal.

"Here in East Asia, we are going to have a celebration on July 4. The 4th of July is known all over the world as the day of American independence In East Asia it is the day on which the Indian Independence League in East Asia was imbued with new light and commenced a new phase in its career. Celebrations on July 4, which will be held all over East Asia wherever there are Indians will be in the nature of a referendum We shall call upon Indians in East Asia on that day to give their verdict on Lord Wavell's offer, and if that verdict be one of condemnation to renew then and there our determination to continue the armed struggle for India's freedom under all circumstances, even if the Congress Working Committee were to accept Lord Wavell's offer.

"Our task in East Asia is a two-fold one. Firstly, to continue the armed struggle which we launched on the 4th February 1943, secondly, to agitate for Indian independence in the international field and to utilize every conflict within the camp of the so-called United Nations, and in particular the conflict between the Soviet Union and the Anglo-Americans. For our fight in East Asia, Malaya is our base So long as the British are kept out of Maláya, our work for India's independence will continue uninterrupted. Therefore, if at any time the British try to land in Malaya we will fight with all the strength that we have.

"When the history of Indian independence is finally written, Indians in Malaya will have a glorious place in that history. The contribution of Indians in Malaya for India's struggle for freedom in men, money and material has been great. India will always remain grateful for the same. In particular, Malaya has been the birth-place of the Azad Hind Fauj and of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind. Malaya has contributed a large number of youngmen who have fought bravely and died for India's freedom, and Malaya has made the largest contribution to the ranks of the 'Rani of Jhansi Regiment'. Indians in Malaya must maintain the brilliant record that they have already set up. It is from Malaya that the call for total mobilization first went out.

"Today I want to appeal to you for more men, more money and more material. After our most recent reverses in Burma your responsibility has become greater. Knowing what you have done in the past I have no doubt that you will do even more in the future I only want you to keep up your faith in the justice of our cause. So long as you keep up this faith you will also keep up your optimism and your confidence in final victory.

"Jai Hind"

Netaji broadcast from Singapore on June 26,1945 ·

"India is now facing a political crisis, and if a wrong step is taken we might suffer a setback in our march towards independence I cannot tell you how worried I feel today, because on the one hand,

independence is within sight, while on the other if a wrong step is taken that independence may recede into the distance

"If our countrymen at home cannot take up arms, and if they cannot even continue civil disobedience against Britain's war effort, let them at least keep up their moral resistance to British Imperialism and refuse to come to any compromise We shall continue to assert India's right to freedom with arms, and so long as we do so no power on earth can prevent India remaining an international issue, provided you do not let us down by compromising with the British Government

"I understand that some of the leaders at home are furious with me for opposing their plans for a compromise with the British Government They are also furious with me for pointing out the blunders of the Congress Working Committee and the Congress, and they are furious with me for pointing out that the Congress Working Committee does not represent national opinion in the Congress or in the country These imperialist leaders are abusing me for taking the help of the Japanese. I am not ashamed of taking the help of Japan My co-operation with Japan is on the basis that Japan recognizes India's complete independence, and it has already granted formal recognition to the 'Provisional Government of Azad Hind' or Free India But those who now want to co-operate with the British Government and fight Britain's imperialist war are prepared to accept the position of subordinates responsible to Britain's Viceroy in India. If leaders co-operate with the British Government on the basis that Britain grants formal recognition to the Government of Free India that would be a different matter Moreover, Japan has given us the arms with which to organize an army of our own with which we can fight British imperialism which is our sole enemy. This army, the Azad Hind Fauj, has been trained by Indian instructors using the Indian language. This army carries India's national flag, and its slogans are India's national slogans The army has its own Indian officers and its own officers' training schools run entirely by Indians And, in the field of battle this army fights under its own Indian commanders some of whom

have now reached the rank of Cenerals. If this army is called a 'puppet army', then it is the British Indian Army that should be called 'puppet army', because it is fighting Britain's Imperialist war under British officers Am I to believe that in an army of 2,500, 000 only a microscopic number of Indians are found fit to obtain the highest honour in the British army, namely, the Victoria Cross. Not one single Indian has yet been found fit to hold the rank of General.

"Comrades! I have said that I am not ashamed to seek the help of Japan I can go forward and say that if the almighty British Empire can go down on its knees in order to obtain the help of the United States of America, there is no reason why we, an enslaved and disarmed nation, should not take help from our friends. Today we are taking the help of Japan, tomorrow we shall not hesitate to get help from any other Power if that be possible, and if that be desirable in the interests of India. Nobody will be more happy than myself if we could achieve India's independence without foreign help of any sort. But I have yet to find one single instance, in modern history, where an enslaved nation has achieved its liberation without foreign help of any sort.

In August, when the Japanese had decided to lay down their arms Netaji informed the Japanese General in Singapore that they must give no undertaking to the British on behalf of the I. N A, as it was an entirely independent army. General Itagaki, the Japanese Commander told Netaji that he could not promise anything as the policy and orders for him would be laid down by Marshal Count Terauchi, who was the Commander of all the Japanese forces in South-East Asia. Netaji, therefore, left Singapore on August the 16th by plane and arrived at Bangkok the same evening. In Singapore, he left Major-General Kiani in command of all the troops in Malaya

On the evening of August the 16th, Netaji visited all camps and delivered short farewell speeches to each unit Last of all he visited the S. S Group and delivered a short speech. He then personally declared the officers and men with awards which they had won for their gallant deeds on the battlefield. He then shook hands

with all the officers. From the men there were thunderous shouts of "Chalo Delhi" "Inquilab Zindabad", "Azad Hind Zindabad", "Netaji Zindabad". Great big tears rolled down Netaji's eyes, no leader could have expected greater devotion and loyalty from his men.

At night he called all senior officers to his bungalow for a buffet dinner and gave them full instructions regarding the course they were to follow should anything happen to him The following morning, accompanied by some of his selected staff officers, he left for Saigon to meet Field Marshal Count Terauchi to settle full details of the surrender of the I. N A. But, Count Terauchi informed him that he was not in a position to decide anything about it as the orders would come from Tokyo Netaji, therefore, left Saigon on the following day accompanied by Col Habibur Rehman. It is stated by Col. Habibur Rehman that when their aeroplane took off from Formosa aerodrome *en route* to Tokyo it was suddenly hit by something and there was a big bang He is of the opinion that it was probably a vulture that had hit one of the propellers This was at a height of 300 feet above the ground The plane suddenly crashed on the side of a hill which was near the aerodrome and caught fire He then leaped out of the plane and pulled Netaji out of burning mass Col Habibur Rehman was himself very badly hurt and his hands and face still bear marks of those burns According to him, when Netaji was brought out he had two serious injuries on his head He was also very badly hurt, but he was conscious for half an hour after which he became unconscious. They were then both taken to the same hospital and according to Col Habibur Rehman, Netaji died six hours later Col Habibur Rehman then tried to bring back his body to Singapore, but owing to air transport difficulty this could not be arranged Netaji was cremated, and Col Habibur Rehman says that he was present at the cremation ceremony and he has safely stored Netaji's ashes in a home in Tokyo. When the British forces landed at Singapore and Bangkok the Azad Hind Fauj at these places under the command of Major Gen. M Z Kiani and Major Gen J. K Bhonsle surrendered as an independent force to the British Thus closed in tragic fashion a glorious chapter

in the history of India's struggle for Freedom, which was started by Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose.

Back to India

One thing we all found on arrival in India, and that was that the people inside the country knew very little about the real worth and activities of the I N. A. British propaganda had been too powerful and despite four I. N. A Broadcasting stations at Saigon, Bangkok, Singapore and Rangoon working day and night to explain the truth about the I. N. A , the Indian people still believed that the I. N. A. was just a puppet army of the Japanese.

All the I. N A. officers were more upset and worried about this than their fate before British Court Martial. Some of our leaders were still referring to us as "misguided soldier of India" It was at this time that Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, on release from Jail, exposed the full facts to the Indian people and won the everlasting gratitude of the I. N. A. for saving their prestige and honour.

We can also never forget the services rendered to I. N. A. by late Sri Bhulabhai Desai I still remember vividly the first interview three of us accused Sahgal, Dhillon, and myself had with him. He said, "Gentlemen, I have come to defend you, but much more important than the defence of your persons, is the defence of the honour and prestige of Netaji and the I. N A. If your lives can be saved with honour we will try and save you, otherwise it would be better for you all to die and save the honour of your leader and the organization to which you belonged". In saying so, he took the very words out of our month This was precisely what every I N. A. officer and man wanted.

At the time Mr. Bhulabhai was in a very poor state of health. His doctor warned him, "Mr Desai, you are working too hard. If you continue like this you will kill yourself" Bhulabhai replied, "Doctor, don't worry. Even if I have to die, I am going to save these three young men". With indomitable spirit and determination he fought out his case, and won the last "Great Victory" of his life. We

were released and Bhulabhai was perhaps the happiest man in India

In March 1946, when I went to see him in Bombay, he was on his death bed He was very much moved to see me He said, "I do not mind dying now. I have seen you alive, and last advice to you is to continue the struggle for which you have suffered so much, and I am sure in the end Netaji will triumph, and India will be free. "Jai Hind" and he closed his eyes.

IMPORTANT PERSONALITIES IN THE INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT.

1. Major General J. K. Bhonsle.

This officer originally belonged to the 5th Marhatta Light Infantry in the British India Army. He had graduated from the Royal Military College, Sandhurst in 1929 At the time of the fall of Singapore, he was commanding 5th Battalion 18th Royal Garhwal Rifles and held the rank of Lt Colonel He is intensely patriotic, and was one of the first to join the I N A

In the first I N A. he commanded the Field Force which consisted of —

3 Infantry Battalions 1 Heavy Gun Battalion 1 Armoured Fighting Vehicles Battalion and other Artillery units.

During the period of the crisis, he was of the opinion that the I N A should not be dissolved, as it was a unique opportunity that the Indians outside India had of doing some service to their motherland

On the recognition of the I N A he was, very deservingly appointed as the Director of Military Bureau He was at the helm of affairs of the I N A. from February, 1943—August, 1943, when Netaji took over the direct command of the I N A as the Supreme Commander During this period Gen Bhonsle commanded the army magnificiently

He is a very fine organizer and a brilliant strategist.

On arrival of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, the post of the Director of Military Bureau was abolished and he was appointed as the Chief of Staff to the Supreme Commander, and as such he was second in importance to Netaji

When Netaji moved to Burma early in 1944, Gen. Bhonsle was left behind to manage affairs in Malaya. When Netaji flew to Tokyo in August, 1945, Gen Bhonsle was left incharge of the main I N.A. Headquarters at Bangkok, where he was captured by the British forces.

He was a Minister in the Provisional Government of Azad Hind and a member of the "War Council".

He is a descendent of Shivaji and is related to the Gaekwar of Baoda.

2. Major General A. C. Chatterjee.

Major General Chatterji is an old I.M S. officer and at the time of the fall of Singapore he had approximately 26 years service to his credit.

Before going out to Malaya, he was the Director of Public Health in Bengal.

At the time of the fall of Singapore he was the senior most Indian Medical Officer and undertook to look after the medical arrangements for the prisoners of war. In addition to this duty he also acted as one of the advisors to Gen Mohan Singh.

He was one of the most ardent and sincere workers in the movement from the very start He organized numerous meetings and gave several propaganda lectures to troops and it was due to his activities that a large number of officers and men joined the I N A

He was one of the closest associates of Mr Ras Behari Bose and during the crisis in the I N A., he was against its disbandment by Gen. Mohan Singh.

On the recognition of the I.N A. he was appointed General Secretary to the I.I.L. under Mr. R B Bose

On arrival of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose he was put in charge of the Publicity and Propaganda (E & C Department).

During the operations in 1944, he was appointed Governor Designate of the liberated areas and he was to be the first Governor of Manipur area.

In Juue, 1944, he visited the front line troops and the areas liberated by them where he was slighitly wounded by enemy shell fire

On return to Rangoon in November, 1944, he accompanied Netaji on his visit to Tokyo from where they all returned in January, 1945

Early in January, 1945, he was appointed "Foreign Minister" to the Provisional Government of Azad Hind

He was in the party which was accompanying Netaji to Tokyo on his last trip in August, 1946, but owing to the difficulty of air-transport he with the rest of his party had to be left behind in Saigon, and where they were all later captured by the British forces.

In the I N A he was one of the most trusted officers of Netaji, and is perhaps the most experienced He is a passionate lover of his country and an untiring worker He is a great organizer under whom it is a pleasure to work He is approximately 55 years of age and comes from Calcutta

3. Major General M. Z. Kiani.

This officer originally belonged to 1st Battalion 14th Punjab Regiment He was commissioned from the Indian Military Academy in 1935, where he won the Sword of Honour and the Gold Medal Prize for being the most outstanding cadet of the term.

During the Malayan Campaign he served as a staff officer in-charge operation to General Heathe, Commander of Third India Corps At the time of surrender of Singapore, he was the Battalion Second in Command

He joined the I.N.A from the very beginning, and was responsible, as the Chief of General Staff, for organising the first I.N A. under General Mohan Singh.

During the crisis in the I N.A he agreed with General Mohan Singh disbanding it, but later on being assured that Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose would be coming to take over command of the I N.A. he decided to remain in it.

After the rocognition, he was appointed Army Commander under Gen. Bhonsle—Director of Military Bureau.

On arrival of Netaji, he took command of No. 1 Division which was sent to fight in Burma early in 1944. He had under him three Brigades—

No. 1 Guerilla Brigade (Subhas Brigade) under Major General Shahnawaz Khan

No. 2 Guerilla Brigade (Gandhi Brigade) under Colonel I. J. Kiani.

No. 3 Guerilla Brigade (Azad Brigade) under Colonel Gulzara Singh.

It was this Division that fought in the Arakan, Haka-Falam, Tamu, Palel and Kohima during the operations in 1944.

On return from the front in October, 1944, he was appointed General Secretary to the War Council and accompained Netaji to Tokyo in 1944.

At the time of the surrender of I.N A. he was in command of troops in Singapore.

During the operations Gen Kiani proved himself to be most capable Commander in the field, but it was really as a Staff Officer that he made a name for himself He was generally looked upon as the best staff officer in the I.N A.

He is approximately 56 years of age, and comes from a well known family in Rawalpindi district.

4. Major General A. D. Loganathan.

This officer belonged to the Indian Medical service and at the time of the fall of Singapore had approximately 25 years' service to his credit He was at that time commanding No 19 Indian Hospital and held the rank of a Lieut -Colonel. After the surrender he was one of the very first officers to join in the Indian Independence Movement and also to create an active propaganda to induce others to do the same. In the first I.N.A. under General Mohan Singh, he was the Director of Medical Services. He was also one of the delegates

to the Bangkok Conference

During the crisis in the I N A. he was not in favour of Gen. Mohan Singh disbanding the I.N.A. He was a member of the Administrative Committee that was formed during the period of the crisis from December 1942 to March 1943 and was largely responsible for creating that atmosphere among the officers which later enabled Mr Rash Behari Bose reorganise the I N A. He was also a member of the Executive Committee which was constituted by Mr. Rash Behari Bose to consider the appointment of various afficers to important military posts in the I N A.

In the second I N A. under the Director of Military Bureau, General Bhonsle, he worked as the Chief Administrator in the I.N A. Supreme Command and was responsible for looking after the general administration and discipline of the I N A

On arrival of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose in Singapore and the establishment of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind, he was appointed one of its Ministers In February, 1944, he was sent as High Commissioner of the Andamans and Nicobar Islands, which being part of Indian territory, were ceded by the Japanese to the Provisional Government of Azad Hind and were renamed Shahid and Swaraj Islands He returned to Singapore in September, 1944 on account of ill-health.

Early in 1945 he arrived at Rangoon to submit his report to Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose.

At the time of the surrender of the I N A in Burma he volunteered to remain behind in command of the I N A

He is approximately 56 years of age and is greatly respected by all officers. He is popularly known as Uncle by all the officers in the I N A

He is a passionate lover of his country and an untiring worker inspite of his failing health. He has a very pleasant disposition which endears him to all his subordinates.

5. Major General Aziz Ahmad.

This officer belonged to the 1st Kapurthala Infantry and at the time of the fall of Singapore was commanding the State Forces and held the rank of a Major. He is one of those officers who originally did not believe in the sincerity of the Japanese and in the idea of forming an I. N. A. but later he changed his view and volunteered for the I. N A in May, 1942. In doing so he believed that he would be better able to serve his men and protect them from Japanese exploitation by being in the I. N. A. He was a member of the Bangkok Conference and in the first I. N A. he raised and commanded the Nehru Brigade. During the crisis in the I N.A. he was one of the staunchest officers who supported General Mohan Singh in his idea of dissolving the I. N. A.

After the arrest of General Mohan Singh, he was called for an interview by General Iwakuro and Mr. Rash Behari Bose and offered the command of the Indian National Army which he refused. But on being assured that Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose would be coming in the near future to take over the command of the I. N. A, he decided to continue. On the re-organisation of the I. N. A. under the D M B. General Bhonsle, he continued to command the Nehru Brigade On arrival of Netaji and the establishment of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind, he was appointed a Minister of State

He arrived in Burma with his Brigade in May, 1944 but had to return to Malaya to take over command of No 2 Division which was a newly raised Division. He returned to Rangoon early in October, 1944 with advance parties of No. 2 Division which by this time had started moving to Burma.

In November, 1944, he was elected a member of the war Council and during the absence of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose on his visit to Tokyo from November to December, 1944, he officiated as Supreme Commander.

Early in 1945 when the main body of No 2 Division had concentrated in Rangoon and was preparing to advance to the front line, he was unluckily injured in a bombing raid and admitted to the

hospital with a serious head injury and I (Major General Shah Nawaz) had to take over command of No 2 Division On his recovery in April, 1945, he was given command of No. 1 Division which was at that time concentrated at Zeyawadi. Most of the personnel of this Division which had been in action around Imphal in 1944, were sick men and were very poorly armed and equipped and were in no position to offer any resistance to the British armoured forces when they arrived at Zeyawadi He surrendered with the whole of his Division at the end of April 1945 in Zeyawadi.

Major General Aziz Ahmad was one of the most trusted officers of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose to whom he was intensely devoted and was always willing to sacrifice his all for the achievement of his ideal—the liberation of his country. He has excellent military knowledge in handling large formations and was always well-known for his skill in training the troops under his command. He is also an excellent speaker and can move masses.

He is approximately 40 years of age, enjoys robust health, and is most energetic He comes of a well known Rajput family in Kapurthala State.

6. Major General G. R. Nagar.

This officer belonged to the R. I A S. C. and at the time of the fall of Singapore held the rank of a Lt Col Soon after the surrender he was given command of Bidadari prisoner of war camp which accommodated approximately 15,000 Indian prisoners of war.

In April, 1942, he was sent to Saigon to work in the Broadcasting Station there Most of the people in India must be familiar with his broadcasts and commentaries under the name of Major Mirza. He returned from Saigon in July, 1943 About the middle of 1944, when No 3 Division was raised he was appointed its Commander. During the campaign in 1945, he was given the role of defending the western coastline of Malaya in the vicinity of Alorastar, Serambag and Ipoh Under orders from the Supreme Command he surrendered with his Division in Malaya on arrival of the

British forces there

Major General Nagar is a fine speaker and an enthusiastic worker for the Indian independence.

7. Major General Allagappan.

This officer belonged to the Indian Medical service and at the time of the fall of Singapore was commanding 27th I. G. H. and was holding the rank of a Lt Col He was regarded as one of the best surgeons in the British Army. After the surrender he volunteered to join the I. N. A. from the very beginning On the organisation of the first I N A his services were loaned to the Indian Independence League. He worked with the I. I. L. from May 1942 till July, 1943 when he was recalled by Netaji and appointed incharge of the Enlightenment and Culture Department of the Indian National Army. He surrendered in Singapore with the rest of the I. N. A. Troops. Major General Allagappan is an excellent surgeon and holds strong nationalist views. He is approximately 45 years of age and comes from South India.

8. Colonel A. Q. Gilani.

This officer belonged to 1st Battalion Bahawalpore State Infantry and at the time of the fall of Singapore he held the rank of a Lieut Colonel. He played a prominent part in helping General Mohan Singh to raise the first I N. A and was generally regarded as the leader of Muslim community.

He went to Bangkok conference as a delegate and was elected a member of the "Council of Action" under the presidentship of Mr Rash Behari Bose. He resigned from the Council during the crisis, and proceeded to Penang where he took over command of a school for training I N. A propagandists infiltration into India.

Later towards the end of 1943, he was recalled to Singapore and put incharge of Recruiting and Training department of the Indian Independence League.

He was captured in Singapore by the British forces when they

reoccupied it

Col. Gilani is approximately 40 years of age and comes of a well known Gilani Sayed family of Bahawalpore State He is a good speaker in Hindustani

9. Colonel N. S. Bhagat.

This officer belonged to the Indian Engineers, and at the time of the fall of Singapore was commanding a Field Company of Bombay Sappers and Miners

He was one of those officers who bitterly opposed the formation of an I N A which might be exploited by the Japanese. On account of his uncompromising attitude on this issue he was sent out from Singapore to Borneo in March, 1942

On the return of delegates from Bangkok Conference, he was recalled to Singapore in September, 1942 Realizing that an I. N. A. was going to be formed whether he was in it or not, he decided to join it, with the object of preventing it from being exploited by the Japanese

During the crisis he perhaps played the most prominent part in inducing Gen Mohan Singh to stick to his demands and if necessary to dissolve the I. N A.

On the arrest of General Mohan Singh, he resigned from the I N A and inspite of being offered high posts he refused to rejoin, until the arrival of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose.

After interviewing Netaji, Col Bhagat decided to rejoin the I N A in July, 1943, and from then on, worked most sincerely for the cause In the re-organised Headquarters of I. N A Supreme Command under Netaji, he worked as the Chief Administrator.

On establishment of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind, he was elected one of its Ministers

Early in 1944, when No 2 Division was raised he was appointed its commander. He organised and commanded his division very efficiently In May, 1944 however, owing to certain differences of opinion between Gen Bhonsle and Col. Bhagat, he had to be

removed from the command of No. 2 Division, which was taken over by Col. Aziz Ahmad.

After his removal he was sent to Taungyi, a hill station in Shan States and kept separate from the rest of the I. N. A

Early in 1945 he was transferred to Zeyawadi where on arrival of British forces, he reported to them.

During the time that Col. Bhagat was holding appointment in the I N A. he always worked very sincerely. He was looked upon as one of the most efficient and popular officers in the I N. A.

He is very strong headed and straightforward and was always well known for his anti-Japanese views. He is an ardent nationalist.

During the first I. N. A trial, he was approached by British authorities to give evidence against me and my other two colleagues, Col. P. K Sahgal and G. S. Dhillon, and make statements against Netaji, but he refused and consequently he was asked to resign his commission in the Indian Army.

10. Colonel Ehsan Qadir.

This officer belonged to 5/2 Punjab Regiment and was adjutant to his Battalion during the early-part of Malayan Campaign.

He was commissioned from the Indian Military Academy in 1935 and at the time of the fall of Singapore, he had approximately 8 years service, and was holding the rank of a Captain.

He was captured by the January, 1942 in the vicinity of Kualalumpur and sent by Capt Mohan Singh to go and take charge of a Radio Broadcasting station at Saigon.

People in India must be quite familiar with English and Hindustani broadcasts which were put out from Saigon. All these broadcasts were arranged and controlled entirely by Col. Ehsan Qadir.

When a crisis arose between Gen. Mohan Singh and the Japanese, he returned from Saigon, in order to attempt to pursuade Gen. Mohan Singh not to disband the I N. A.

In the second I. N. A. under the Director of Military Bureau

Gen Bhonsle, he was put incharge of the training of civil volunteers

On the establishment of the Provisional Govt of Azad Hind, he was appointed one of its Ministers. He moved with the Headquarters, when Netaji transferred it from Singapore to Rangoon

In Rangoon he raised and organised the "Azad Hind Dal" which was an organisation of civilians especially trained to administer liberated territories He moved to Maymyo with his Dal in April, 1944

On the failure of Manipur Campaign he returned to Rangoon in October, 1944. He was also a member of the War Council.

He was captured by the British Forces at Pegu in April, 1945

Col. Ehsan Qadir has very good knowledge of the political problems of India He is a good organiser and a brilliant schemer

He is approximately 33 years of age and is the son of Sir Abdul Qadir of Lahore.

11. Colonel S. M. Hussain.

He belonged to 4/19th Hyderabad Regiment and at the time of the fall of Singapore held the rank of Captain

In the first I N. A he acted as a staff officer to General Bhonsle, who was commanding the Hind Field Force.

In the second I N. A he was given the command of 1st Infantry Regiment He arrived in Rangoon with the advance parties of the Regiment in October, 1944, but owing to all heavy arms and equipment being sunk in the sea transit, his unit could not leave Rangoon till February, 1945. He arrived at the front in March, 1945 and took over the defence of Magwe-Taundwingy area which is adjacent to the Burma oil fields area

He surrendered to the British forces at Magwe in April, 1945.

He was also a member of the Cabinet of the Provisional Government

He is approximately 33 years of age and comes of a renowned Syed family in Lyallpore

12. Colonel Habibur Rehman.

This officer belonged to 1st Battalion 14th Punjab Regiment and was the adjutant of the Battalion when it went into action at Jitra in December, 1941.

He was commissioned from the Indian Military Academy in 1936 and at the time of surrender held the rank of Captain.

He was captured by the Japanese in the vicinity of Kuala-lumpur Although he never at any time completely trusted the Japanese he was always of the opinion that the only way to secure India's freedom was to organise a powerful army in East Asia, and then fight who ever dares to try to dominate India.

He was a member of the delegation that went to Bangkok Conference. In the first I. N A. he was the Adjutant General in the I. N A Headquarters

After the crisis he was appointed commandant of the officers' Training School, and it was here that he made a name for himself. In a very brief space of time of three months, he was able to infuse great national spirit in the cadets, and to equip them with them necessary military knowledge After graduation, these cadets went straight to the front line and took command of platoons and in some cases companies and gave excellent account of themselves whereever they went and won even the praise of their adversaries It was at this institution that he taught them the famous motto--"Jeena Hai To Marna Seekho", and his cadets lived upto this motto.

In May, 1944, Netaji appointed him Assistant Chief of Staff and ordered him to report at his Headquarters in Rangoon, where his services were urgently required as Netaji was moving up to the front line and he wanted some one reliable to take charge of Military affairs in Rangoon

In November, 1944, Col Habibur Rehman accompanied Netaji to Tokyo and returned with him to Rangoon in January, 1945.

In March, 1945 he was sent to take over command of all I.N.A troops in Singapore and relieve Gen. Bhonsle who was required in Rangoon.

In August, 1945 he was the only I. N. A. officer accompanying Netaji on his last and hazardous air trip to Tokyo. He was in the same plane which was carrying Netaji and crashed at Formosa.

Col Habibur Rehman was the fortunate person who had the honour of bringing back Netaji's last message to his countrymen, which was, "Tell all my countrymen that Subhas fought for India's independence till the last breath of his life"

Col Habibur Rehman was one of Netaji's most trusted officers He is cool, calm and solid as a rock, a devoted follower of his Netaji and a most selfless worker for Indian independence

He is approximately 30 years of age and comes of well known Muslim Rajput family in Mirpur District.

13. Col. S. A. Malik. (Sardar-e-Jang).

This officer belonged to the Bahawalpore State forces and at the time of the fall of Singapore, held the rank of a Captain.

He was a staunch supporter of the I N. A. movement from the very start, and went to Bangkok Conference as a delegate.

On the formation of the I. N A. he was given the command of the Intelligence group, which he commanded and trained with remarkable skill in Singapore.

Early in September, 1943, he left Singapore for Burma. His group was one of the first I. N A units to go into action during the Manipur operations He was the first Indian officer to hoist the Indian National flag on the Indian soil in 1944, in the area around Bishanpore

During the operations he was also the commander of all liberated areas and carried out the administration of those territories

During the operations he commanded his unit with rare skill and distinguished himself and was awarded the much honoured medal "Sardar-e-Jang"

He returned to Rangoon in October, 1944 to recoup his health. He was again sent to the front in February, 1945 While in Mandalay his force was surrendered by the British but he managed to break

through and returned to Rangoon.

On April 24th. 1945, he was in the party that accompanied Netaji on his trek from Rangoon to Bangkok. He was captured by the British forces, with the main forces of the I. N. A. at Bangkok. Col. Malik is a happy-go lucky type of officers, who takes a delight in running into danger. He is intensely patriotic and a great admirer of Netaji.

RANI OF JHANSI REGIMENT.

Soon after his arrival in Singapore Netaji, who from his past experience in India fully appreciated the importance of securing the co-operation of Indian women in the fight for India's liberation expressed a desire to raise a special fighting unit of Indian women to be known as "Rani of Jhansi Regiment". Accordingly on July 12th a women's section of the Indian Independence League convened a mass meeting of Indian women. The meeting was addressed by Netaji. Some of the Indian women had walked 10 to 12 miles to the meeting place There was a great enthusiasm amongst the ladies who were always as anxious and willing as men to sacrifice themselves for the sake of Indian Independence.

Netaji addressed them in the following words.—

"Sisters, you all know, as well as I do, the part our women at home have played in the Freedom Movement, especially during the last twenty-two years, since the year 1921, when the Congress was reborn under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. It is not only in connection with the Congress movement of Civil Disobedience, but also in connection with the secret revolutionary movement, that our sisters have played a noble part In fact, it will be no exaggeration for me to say that there is no sphere of public activity, there is no department of national endeavour, in which Indian women have not gladly and bravely shared, along with our men, the burden of national struggle. Whether it is touring from village to village without food and drink, whether it is lecturing at one meeting after another, whether it is carrying the Freedom-message from door to door, whether it is running election campaigns or whether it is leading processions along public streets in defiance of official orders and

in spite of lathi charges by the inhuman British Police, or whether it is facing bravely imprisonment and persecution, insult and humiliation, nowhere have our women been found wanting. Our brave sisters have also played a prominent part in the secret revolutionary movement They have shown that when the need arises they could, like their brothers, shoot very well . If to-day I express my fullest confidence in you, it is because I know what our women are capable of, and therefore I say without the slightest exaggeration, that there is no suffering, which our sisters are not capable of enduring.

"History teaches us that every Empire has its fall just as it has its rise. And the time has come for the British Empire to disappear from the face of this world. We see with our own eyes how that Empire has disappeared from this part of the world. It shall disappear from another part of the world, from India, as well..

"If there is anyone either here or elsewhere who thinks that it is an unwomanly act to shoulder a rifle, I would ask her to turn to the pages of our history. What had our brave women done in past ? What did the brave Rani of Jhansi do in the revolution of 1857, India's First War of Independence It was this queen who with drawn sword on horse back led her men to battle. Through our ill-luck she fell, she failed, and India failed But we have to continue and complete the work which the Great Rani undertook in 1857.....

"Therefore in the last and final War of Independence we want not one Rani of Jhansi, but thousands and thousands of Ranis of Jhansi It is not the number of rifles you may carry or the number of shots you may fire which is important Equally important is the moral effect of your brave example"....

On the conclusion of the speech Netaji asked for recruits for

the Rani of Jhansi Regiment and the Red Cross unit. A very large number of ladies immediately volunteered their services and a training camp was started for them in Singapore Amongst the 600 volunteers that joined this Regiment at Singapore were young girls and elderly ladies who came mostly from very high and respectable families Among them were Hindu, Muslim and Sikh girls, girls who came from every nook and corner of India. In that training camp there were no luxuries They had to undergo very strenuous military training which included the use of machine guns, tommy guns, hand grenades, rifles and bayonets. They were also put through a very strenuous course of physical training and general lectures on India's social and economic life were also delivered to them In the camp they had to live on very simple food. Rice, fish and vegetables was the only diet they had For sleeping at night they did not have soft and comfortable beds They slept on hard wooden floor with only one blanket underneath.

The rules and regulations in the camp were very strict, no visitors were allowed and relatives were permitted to meet them only once a week. From morning till late in the evening they were busy with the training Dr Lakshmi Swaminathan, a young energetic and outstandingly brave lady was selected by Netaji to be their commander.

Within a very brief period of 6 months they had mastered all their training and were every bit as well trained and disciplined as any soldier of the Azad Hind Fauj They were particularly good in bayonets fighting and all of them were always eager to use their bayonets against the British forces

Early in 1944 when other units of the Azad Hind Fauj were moving to Burma for an assault on Imphal, the girls of the Rani of Jhansi Regiment submitted an application written in their own blood to Netaji informing him that they were as anxious as any male member of the Azad Hind Fauj to proceed to the front and to lay down their lives for the liberation of their country. In this letter they requested Netaji to give them an early opportunity. Netaji conceded to their

request and Rani of Jhansi Regiment was moved from Singapore to Rangoon where a second camp for training of women volunteers had been started early in 1944 The strength by now had reached 1,000 volunteers; thousands more were on the waiting list, but due to various administrative difficulties they could not be taken in.

When the Azad Hind Fauj began its assault on 'Imphal', detachments of the Rani of Jhansi Regiment were moved to Maymyo. There were two sections, one was the nursing section, the primary role of which was to take part in actual fighting. Nevertheless every girl in the Rani of Jhansi Regiment was trained to fight and to work as nurses in a hospital. Reference to the excellent work that the nursing section of the Rani of Jhansi Regiment did at Maymyo has already been made in my book elsewhere and I will not repeat it here.

As regards the fighting section it was Netaji's intention that they should take part in actual fighting after the capture of Imphal. It was also his intention if and when Calcutta was captured, the Rani of Jhansi Regiment would be at the head of the Azad Hind Fauj in the triumphant entry into Calcutta. Although due to our failure to capture Imphal, Rani of Jhansi Regiment never actually had an opportunity to fight, I am certain that had they been given an opportunity they would certainly have distinguished themselves. All of them were as brave as tigresses and as hard as nails. In the final stages of their training they had to march 15 to 20 miles a day twice weekly, carrying their packs weighing at least 40 lbs of rifles and ammunition. Every morning during the physical training period they used to run at a fast pace of 2 miles at a stretch. On one occasion in October, 1944, a ceremonial parade of the Azad Hind Fauj in Rangoon was held. There were approximately 3,000 soldiers on parade Rani of Jhansi Regiment was on the right and was the leading unit. All the Japanese generals, Burmese Ministers and other prominent citizens of Rangoon had come to witness the parade. Netaji was standing and talking from a dias and all the troops were lines up infront of him in the middle of a big open parade ground.

After Netaji finished his speech orders were given to troops to

march past and give salute to Netaji. As the Rani of Jhansi Regiment started marching there was an air-raid alarm Japanese fighters took off from an aerodrome near by. British bombers and fighter planes were coming to raid Rangoon In a few moments they arrived and a fierce machine gun battle started just above us. All the visitors including the Japanese generals realising the grave danger ran away for safety and took shelter in trenches nearby. Netaji stood on the dias calm and unmoved like a statue. Rani of Jhansi Regiment girls kept marching past him in perfect step in a manner as if nothing had happened All of a sudden the enemy planes swooped very low on the area where this parade was being held. One of them flying at a tree top height approximately 50′ of the ground passed within 100 yards of Netaji The anti-air craft guns opened fire on this plane. The shells hit one of our gallant soldiers marching past Netaji and blew off her head She died instantaneously There was no panic at all Others kept marching on in perfect step. Had the enemy plane which had as many as 6 machine guns in it opened fire both Netaji and all the members of the Rani of Jhansi Regiment would probably have been killed.

On another occasion when some members of the Rani of Jhansi Regiment were being evacuated from Rangoon to Bangkok early in December 1944 their train was attacked by British guerillas. Our girls immediately opened fire on the enemy and forced them to retreat. In this fight 2 of them were killed and two were injured, but they had inflicted much greater loss on the enemy.

The determination and fortitude with which they faced the rigours on closely followed up withdrawal from Rangoon to Bangkok in the middle of monsoon season has been described in full detail elsewhere. During this withdrawal they covered over 200 miles on foot carrying all their arms and equipment The achievements of the Rani of Jhansi Regiment have proved beyond doubt that there is nothing that our women cannot do and that if they are given an opportunity they are as good if not superior to the women of any nation in the world.

Before the surrender Netaji personally ascertained that each girl was sent back safely to her parents.

SUBHAS BRIGADE.

Soon after taking direct command of the I N A. Netaji called a conference of all senior officers at his Military Headquarters in Singapore. The following officers were present:—

1.	Maj Gen	J. K. Bhonsle.	5.	Colonel	I. J. Kiani,
2	„ „	M. Z. Kiani.	6,	„	Gulzara Singh,
3.	„ „	Aziz Ahmed.	7.	„	Habib-ur-Rehman
4.	„ „	Shah Nawaz.	8.	„	P. K. Sahgal.

At the conference Netaji revealed the discussions he had with Field Martial Terauchi, Commander-in-chief of all the Japanese forces in South East Asia regarding the employment of the Indian National Army in the coming operation:—

Netaji stated that Count Terauchi had told him that the Japanese did not think that the I N A would be able to fight as well as Japanese soldiers as it had been defeated in battle of Malaya and consequently its soldiers were demoralised.

Secondly he said that the I N A. which had once been a part of the British Indian Army was used to fighting under British system of administration in which ample supply of luxurious rations was considered a necessity, whereas in the Japanese Army the case was just the reverse In fighting they had to undergo great hardships and live on very meagre rations The I N A. he said would not be able to stand up to these hardships

Lastly he said that the I. N A was an army composed of soldiers who were once British mercenaries, and had no political education or political feeling and as such they would not be able to resist the temptation of deserting over to the British side where they were better prospects of getting good rations, pay and of meeting their families whom they had not seen for several years

He, therefore, suggested to Netaji that the main force of the

Indian National Army should be left behind in Singapore as they would not be required for fighting. The Japanese soldiers he said would do all the fighting and liberate India and all that the Japanese solicited was the personal co-operation of Netaji to enlist the good will and sympathy of the Indian people He also suggested the use of a small number of I N. A soldiers belonging to the special services and intelligence groups for purposes of infiltration and for propaganda in the front line with the object of lowering the morale of the British Indian Army.

Netaji's reply to Terauchi was short and decisive He told him·

"Any liberation of India secured through Japanese sacrifices is to me worse than slavery." He told Terauchi that the Manipur Campaign was a Battle for Indian independence and as such it was against the national honour of India that the soldiers of I N A should stay behind while the Japanese advanced into Indian territory. Netaji in--sisted that in the coming struggle, the I N A soldiers must form a spear-head of the advance into.India so that the first drop of blood to be shed on the sacred soil of India would be that of a soldier of the I N. A He maintained that the Indians must make their utmost endeavour to secure Indian independence entirely by themselves and then, if, inspite of their maximum efforts and sacrifices they were still unable to achieve it, then and then only would they ask for Japanese assistance The Japanese Commander-in-chief agreed to this, but requested Netaji to send only one selected brigade into action as a test case, and if it proved, it could really fight and bear the hardships as well as the Japanese troops then the rest of the I N. A. would also be sent into action

Having explained this Netaji asked all officers to express their opinions on the subject, and it was eventually decided that a new brigade known as No 1 Guerilla Regiment should be raised by selecting best soldiers from other 3 brigades, Gandhi, Azad and Nehru This Brigade was to go into action first and if it proved satisfactory the I. N. A. would follow suite

I was selected its commander with Col. Thakur Singh as the Regimental second-in-command, and Col. Mahboob Ahmad as the regimental adjutant.

The regiment was raised at Taiping in September 1943 and the soldiers themselves gave it the name of Subhas Brigade. Netaji did not approve of it as he was against the idea of giving the name of living persons to I N. A brigades. He repeatedly issued instructions that no one should call it 'Subhas Brigade' but the soldiers found it hard to obey the orders

On arrival at Taiping the Brigade was properly re-organised with Major P. S. Raturi, Major Ram Singh and Major Padam Singh in command of first, second and third battalions respectively. Orders were issued that the Brigade must be prepared to move into action within two months. This brigade like the other 3 brigades of No. 1 Division was armed with medium machine guns, light machine guns, rifles and hand grenades

I N.A. Guerilla brigades had no artillery or mortar covering fire support nor did they have any wireless or telephonic communications. Machine guns were very deficient of belts and magazines. There were no optical or other instruments and no spare parts for machine guns were available nor was there any animal or mechanical transport available for carrying these weapons across the country.

Medical arrangements within the brigade were very inadequate. There were only five medical officers to look after the 3000 men. They had to be split up to form advance and base regimental hospitals Doctors had particularly no surgical instruments and very little medicine. There was also a great shortage of clothing and boots Some of the soldiers had to do jungle war-fare training barefooted in the most impenetrable and poisonous insects infested tropical forests of Malaya.

It was under these circumstances that No. 1 Grlla Bde. had to be prepared to proceed to Burma to take part in the operations within a short period of two months. Thanks to the efforts of Col. M Z. Kiani, Divisional Commander and Lt. Col. N.N. Khosla, the quarter

master adjutant The deficiency of all arms, equipment and clothing was made up by withdrawing these items from other brigades.

The Japanese, however, gave no assistance Netaji worked like one inspired. He collected large sums of money from civilians who contributed voluntarily and bought whatever was available in the market to make up the deficiency of the I N A. He always maintained that it was our fight and we must not depend too much on Japanese assistance.

Most intensive spiritual as well as military training of the soldiers was started In military training special attention was paid to jungle war-fare In his special talks to the troops Netaji talked very frankly to them and told them exactly in clear and concise terms the hardships they would have to endure He advised all those who were not prepared for all these to stay behind, but the soldiers with one voice exclaimed 'Netaji, give us a chance and we will prove to the whole world that the so called Indian mercenary soldiers can fight as gallantly for the liberation of their country as any other soldier in the world' Netaji also told the soldiers of the Azad Hind Fauj that never at any time were they to accept any orders, racial superiority, any other form of domination by the Japanese. He told them that they were Indians and that they should always feel proud of Indians who were as good as any other nation in the world

The Japanese he said by helping us to wage war against the British were doing no special favour to us He explained that as long as the British held India and used it as a base of operations against Japan, the Japanese Empire in East Asia could never be secure and that in their own interests it was imperative for the Japanese to help the I N.A drive the British out of India Further more in a free India, Japan was likely to gain a great deal commercially and economically through a free exchange of goods.

But he always warned his soldiers that where the question of the Independence of their country was concerned they were to trust no one, not even our allies, the Japanese, and that the surest guarantee against betrayal was their own armed might which must be increased hundred

fold as they advanced into India His instructions on this subject were implicit. He said if ever you find the Japanese trying to establish any type of control over India turn round and fight them as vigorously as you will fight the British

He warned his soldiers that they were an army of starving millions and as such they must do away with all luxuries and prepare to fight and starve like their brothers in Bengal "You are the Saviours of Indian Masses." He commanded, "There must be no looting or raping. Anyone seeing an Indian or a Japanese committing this crime must shoot him at sight." He trained his soldiers to respect Indian women like their own mothers and sisters

He talked to his men as a man to a man and whenever an occasion rose they stood up and fought like men. He trusted his soldiers and they trusted and loved him and for him thousands laid down their lives without a flinch. As reported already in a speech at Singapore on July 4th he told all the officers and men of the I. N. A. that those of them who had decided to fight for India's liberation must know that he was fakir He had no guns, no tanks, no aeroplanes with which to equip his army nor did he have unlimited sums of money or treasures to keep his soldiers in luxury. He told them, "On the March to Delhi I can promise you only thirst, hunger, forced marches and in the end death Give me blood—the price of 'Liberty' and I promise you the independence of your country." All the soldiers with one voice replied 'Netaji, if we can free India by shedding our blood, we promise that we will make such sacrifices that our blood shall flow in streams on the plains of Manipur." In the actual fighting that followed in April and May 1944 they lived up to their promise and shed their blood most generously. 4000 of them were killed and as they had promised streams of their blood flowed on the plains of Manipur and in those streams of blood of the soldiers of the Indian National Army, the blood of Hindu, Muslim, Sikh Christian intermingled and flowed freely for one cause—a great, free and united India

It was under such a leader and for the great cause that the

soldiers of Subhas, Gandhi, Azad and Nehru Brigades together with their other comrades of Intelligence and Bahadur groups decided to face the formidable forces massed by the British on the Indo-Burma border. Full details of actual fighting that took place follow elsewhere in the book.

ARRIVAL OF NETAJI IN SINGAPORE

The news of the exact time of the arrival of Netaji was kept a close secret. Only officers of the I. N. A. and leading Indian civilians were told about it.

On July 2nd 1943 at about 11 a.m. all the leading Indian civilians, Japanese embassy and military staff and senior officers of the I.N.A. assembled at the civil air port to receive him A guard of honour composed of the picked men of the Indian National Army was also present there. At about mid-day a twined engined Japanese plane arrived and landed at the air port and halted where we were all waiting for him. After a few seconds which seemed like hours, the door of the plane was opened and Netaji stepped out followed by his Secretary, Mr. Abid Hasan.

Mr. Rash Behari Bose, Col. Yamamoto, and Mr. Senda of the Japanese Liaison Department were also in the same plane and had accompanied Netaji from Tokyo.

On alighting from the plane Netaji came straight to us and one by one shook hands and had a few words with every one of us I was thrilled, it was the first time in my life that I had seen him. I expected so much from him and watched every movement of his with great interest He was dressed in a light brown civilian suit and was wearing a Gandhi cap. After meeting us he proceeded to inspect the guard of honour and then to his official residence.

In the meantime the news of his arrival had spread like wild fire and every man, woman and child turned out to welcome him It was a breath-taking display of love and admiration A sea of humanity—Indians, Chinese, Malayans and Japanese—jostled and got themselves crushed for a look at the great revolutionary.

With his upright and erect carriage, his head held high, proudly unbending, smiling his enchanting smile, Netaji captured all

hearts We felt confident that here was a leader who could be trusted to take up along to our goal

The next day, July the 3rd 1943 Netaji met the leaders of the A.H F. and the League workers from Hong Kong, Thailand, Burma, Borneo etc. What impressed us, the military officers, was the technical knowledge about modern warfare and modern arms which Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose showed.

On July the 4th Netaji held an inaugural session of the conference of the delegates of Indians residing in East Asia A meeting was held at the Cathay Building which was completely packed. At this meeting in a historic speech Sri Rash Behari Bose handed over the reins of the Indian Independence Movement to Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose

Netaji accepting the great responsibility that was handed over to him said.—

"Friends ! The time has now come for freedom-loving Indians to act. Action in war-crisis demands, above all, military discipline, as well as unflinching loyalty to the cause I, therefore, call upon all my country-men in East Asia to line up in one solid phalanx and prepare for the grim fight that is ahead of us I am confident that they will do so .

"I have publicly declared several times that when I left homeland in 1941, on an important mission, it was in accordance with the will of the vast majority of my countrymen Since then, despite all the restrictions imposed by the C I D , I have remained in constant touch with my countrymen at home

"Patriotic Indians abroad have been working as genuine trustees of the freedom-fighters at home I can assure every body once again that whatever we have done up till now, or may do in future, has been and will be for the freedom of India, and we shall never do anything that is either against the interests of India or will not be in accordance with the will of our people ... .

"In order to mobilise all our forces effectively, I intend organising a Provisional Government of Free India By winning freedom

through our own efforts and sacrifice, we shall be acquiring the strength whereby we shall preserve our liberty for all time ..I warn you that though we are absolutely sure of our final victory, we can never afford to under estimate the enemy, and we should even be prepared for temporary setbacks. We have a grim fight ahead of us for the enemy is at once powerful, unscrupulous and ruthless. In this final march to freedom, you will have to face hunger, thirst, privation, forced marchs and death. Only when you pass this test, will freedom be yours. I am confident that you will do so and thereby bring freedom and prosperity to your enslaved and impoverished land "

On July 5th 1943, the formation of the Azad Hind Fauj was announced to the world That day Netaji inspected all the Azad Hind Fauz forces on a ceremonial parade held in front of the Municipal buildings in Singapore. After inspection Netaji addressed the Fauj:—

'Soldiers of India's Army of Liberation!

"To-day is the proudest day of my life. Today it has pleased Providence to give me the unique honour of announcing to the whole world that India's Army of Liberation has come into being. This Army has now been drawn up in military formation on the battlefield of Singapore, which was once the bulwark of the British Empire. This is the Army that will emancipate India from British yoke . Every Indian must feel proud that this Indian Army has been organised entirely under Indian leadership, and that when the historic moment arrives, under Indian leadership it will go into battle . .. Standing to day on the graveyard of the British Empire, even a child is convinced that the almighty British Empire is already a thing of the past .

"Comrades! My Soldiers! let your battle cry be: "To Delhi, to Delhi". How many of us will individually survive this war of freedom, I do not know But I do know this, that we shall ultimately win and our task will not end until our surviving heroes hold the Victory-parade on another graveyard of the British Empire the

Lal Killa of ancient Delhi .

"Throughout my public career, I have always felt that though India is otherwise ripe for independence in every way, she lacks one thing any army of liberation George Washington of America could fight and win freedom, because he had his army. Garibaldi could liberate Italy because he had his armed volunteers behind him. It is your privilege and honour to be the first to come forward and organize India's National Army.. .. Soldiers who always remain faithful to their nation, who perform their duty under all circumstances and who are always prepared to sacrifice their lives, are invincible. Engrave these three ideals in the inmost core of your hearts

"Comrades! You are today the custodians of India's hopes and aspirations So conduct yourselves that your countrymen may bless you and posterity may be proud of you I assure you that I shall be with you in darkness and in sunshine, in sorrow and in joy, in suffering and in victory For the present, I can offer you nothing except hunger, thirst, suffering, forced marches and death. It does not matter who among us will live to see India free It is enough that India shall be free and that we shall give our all to make her free. May God now bless our Army and grant us victory in the coming fight!"

On July the 6th another ceremonial parade of the Azad Hind Fauz was held in front of the Municipal Buildings in honour of Gen. Tojo, the Premier of Japan After taking a salute of the Fauj, Netaji and Gen Tojo retired into a room for a brief talk in which Tojo congratulated Netaji on the formation of the Azad Hind Fauj and assured him of the full support of the Japanese nation.

On July the 9th 1943, Netaji held a mass meeting of Indian civilians and the Azad Hind Fauj and told us in a stirring speech which ran as follows —

"I would like to tell you quite frankly what made me leave home and homeland, on a journey that was fraught with danger of every kind I was lodged safely in a British prison when I silently resolved to risk everything in the attempt to escape from the clutches

of the British. Having been in prison eleven times, it was much easier and much safer for me to continue there, but I felt that the cause of India's independence demanded a journey abroad, regardless of the risk that it involved.

"It took me full three months of prayer and meditation to decide if I had strength enough to face death in fulfilling my duty. Before I could slip out of India, I had to get out of prison and in order to do so, I had to go on hunger strike demanding my release. I knew that neither in India nor in Ireland, had a prisoner succeeded in forcing the British Government to release him I knew also that Terence Macswiney and Jatin Das had died in the attempt to force the Government's hands. But I felt convinced that I had an historic task to fulfil. So I took the plunge, and after seven days of hunger-strike, the Government unexpectedly got unnerved and set me free, with the intention of taking me back to prison again after a month or two But before they could sieze me again I became a free man....

"Friends! You know that I have been actively working in the independence movement ever since I left the University in 1921. I have been through all the civil disobedience campaigns during the last two decades. In addition to this, I have been repeatedly put in prison without trial, on the suspicion of having been connected with secret revolutionary movements whether non-violent or violent—In the light of this experience I came to the conclusion that all the efforts that we could put forward inside India, would not suffice to expel the British from our country . . .

"To put it briefly, therefore, my object in leaving India was to supplement from out side the struggle going on at home... On the other hand, the supplementary help from outside which the national struggle at home so urgently needs is in reality very small. The help that our countrymen at home needed and still need is a two-fold one, moral and material. Firstly, they have to be morally convinced that their victory is assured. Secondly, they have to be given military help from outside .

"The time has come when I can openly tell the whole world

including our enemies, as to how it is proposed to bring about national liberation. Indians outside India, particulary Indians in East Asia, are going to organise a fighting force which will be powerful enough to attack the British army in India When we do so, a revolution' will break out, not among the civil population at home, but also among the Indian Army which is now standing under the British Flag When the British Government is thus attacked from both sides-from inside India and from outside it will collapse, and the Indian people will then regain their liberty. According to my plan, therefore, it is not even necessary to bother about the attitude of the Axis Powers towards India. If Indians outside and inside India will do their duty, it is possible for the Indian people to throw the British out of India and liberate 388 millions of their countrymen Friends, let the slogan of the three million Indians in East Asia be. "Total mobilisation for a Total War" out of this total mobilisation, I expect at least three lakhs soldiers and three crores of dollars. I want also a unit of brave Indian women to form a death-defying Regiment who will wield the sword which the brave Rani of Jhansi wielded in India's First War of Independence in 1857.... ...

"Our countrymen at home are now hard-pressed and they are demanding a second front. Give me total mobilisation in East Asia and I promise you a second front. a real second front for the Indian struggle."

NETAJI TAKES OVER DIRECT COMMAND OF A. H. F.

On August the 25th Netaji formally assumed direct command of the Indian National Army and issued a special order of the day which ran as follows.—

"In the interest of the Indian Independence Movement and of the Azad Hind Fauj, I have taken over the direct command of our Army from this day.

"This is for me a matter of joy and pride—for an Indian there can be no greater honour than to be the Commander of India's Army of Liberation

"I regard myself as the servant of 38 crores of my countrymen I am determined to discharge my duties in such a manner that the interests of these 38 crores may be safe and that every single Indian will have reason to put complete trust in me It is only on the basis of undiluted nationalism and of perfect justice and impartiality that India's Army of Liberation can be build up

"In the coming struggle for the emancipation of our Motherland . . the Azad Hind Fauj has a vital role to play To fulfil this role we must wield ourselves into an army that will have only one goal, Freedom of India, and only one will to do or die in the cause of India's freedom When we stand, the Azad Hind Fauj has to be like a wall of granite, when we march the Azad Hind Fauj has to be like a steam-roller.

"Our task is not an easy one, the war will be long and hard, but I have complete faith in the invincibility of our cause 38 crores of human beings, who form about one fifth of the human race, have a right to be free, and they are now prepared to pay the price of freedom There is consequently no power on earth that can deprive us of our birth-right of liberty any longer . . . . . .

"Comrades! Our work has already begun With the slogan 'Onward To Delhi' on our lips, let us continue to labour and fight till our National Flag flies over the Viceroy's House in New Delhi, and the Azad Hind Fauj holds its Victory Parade inside the ancient Red Fortress of India's Metropolis"

On October 2nd 1943, the 75th birthday anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi was celebrated all over east Asia Addressing a mammoth meeting of Indians in the Farrer Park, Netaji said.—

"I shall devote myself to an estimation of the place of Mahatmaji in the history of India's struggle for independence The service which Mahatma Gandhi has rendered to India and to the cause of India's freedom is so unique and unparalleled that his name will be written in letters of gold in our national history for all time to come...

When the last World War was over and Indian leaders began to demand the liberty that had been promised to them, they discovered for the first time that they had been betrayed by perfidious Albion The reply to their demand came in the form of the Rowlatt Act in 1919 which deprived them of what little liberty they still possessed. And when they protested against that Black Act, the Jallianwalla Bagh massacre followed For all the sacrifices made by the Indian people during the last world War, the two rewards were the Rowlatt Act and the Jallianwalla Bagh massacre . .

After the tragic events of 1919, Indians were stunned and paralysed for the time being All the attempts for achieving liberty had been ruthlessly crushed by the British and their armed forces Constitutional agitation, boycott of British goods armed revolution, all had alike failed to bring freedom There was not a ray of hope left and the Indian people were groping in the dark for a new method and a new weapon of struggle Just at this psychological moment, Gandhiji appeared on the scene with his novel method of Non-cooperation or Satyagraha or Civil disobedience. It appeared as if he had been sent by Providence to show the path of liberty Immediately and spontaneously the whole nation rallied round his banner. India was saved. Every Indian's face was now lit up with hope and confidence.

Ultimate victory was once assured..... ...

"For twenty years and more Mahatma Gandhi has worked for India's salvation, and with him the Indian people have worked

"It is no exaggeration to say that if in 1920 he had not come forward with his new weapon of struggle, India today would perhaps have been still prostrate. His service to the cause of India's freedom are unique and unparalleled. No single man could have achieved more in a single lifetime under similar circumstances. The nearest historical parallel to Mahatma Gandhi is perhaps Mustapha Kamal, who saved Turkey after her defeat in the last World War, and who was then acclaimed by the Turks as the 'Gazi'.

"Since 1920 the Indian people have learnt two things from Mahatma Gandhi, which are the indispensable preconditions for the attainment of independence. They have, first of all, learnt national self-respect and self-confidence as a result of which, revolutionary fervour is now blazing in their hearts. Secondly they have now got a country-wide organization which reaches the remotest villages of India ..

"Mahatma Gandhi has firmly planted our feet on the straight road to liberty He and other leaders are now rotting behind prison bars. The task that Mahatma Gandhi began has therefore to be accomplished by his countrymen at home and abroad . ..

"I would like to remind you that when Mahatma Gandhi commended his non-cooperation programme to the Indian Nation at the annual session of the Congress at Nagpur in December 1920 he said, "If India had the sword to day, she would have drawn the sword". And proceeding further Mahatmaji said that since armed revolution was out of the question, the only other alternative before the country was that of non-cooperation or Satyagraha. Since then times have changed and it is now possible for the Indian people to draw the sword. We are happy and proud that India's Army of Liberation has already come into existence, and is steadily increasing in numbers ... .

Establishment of the Prov. Government of Azad Hind

The historic conference called by the Indian Independence League was attended by delegates from all over East Asia and assembled at the Cathay Buildings, in Singapore at 10-30 a m. on October 21st. 1943. Sri Rash Behari Bose, read the welcome address and Col. Chatterji read the secretariat report Then Netaji came to the rostrum and delivered a thrilling speech for an hour and half. He held a vast audience of thousands spell bound. He explained in Hindustani the significance of the establishment of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind The speech was translated in Tamil by Sri Chidambaram, our well-known lawyer of Singapore

"Loud and prolonged cheers echoed and re-echoed in the vast hall as Netaji took the Oath of allegiance to India He was so moved that at one stage minutes passed but his voice could not triumph over the emotion which struggled in his throat The emotion that suddenly swelled up showed how deeply each word of the Oath and the sanctity of the occasion had effected him In a now loud, now soft, but always firm voice, he read out. "In the name of God, I take this sacred oath that to liberate India and the thirty-eight crores of my countrymen, I, Subhas Chandra Bose, will continue this sacred war of freedom till the last breath of my life." And here he paused It seemed that he would break down. Each one of us had been mentally repeating each word of the oath. We were all leaning forward, physically trying to reach the granite figure of Netaji The whole audience was merged in him Pin-drop silence. With lips tightly closed and eyes glued, body tense, we waited for him to overcome the struggle over emotion. Presently he began in a solemn voice, like an organ in a church.

"I shall always remain a servant of India and look after the welfare of thirty-eight crores of Indian brothers and sisters This shall be for me my highest duty.

"Even after winning freedom, I will always be prepared to shed the last drop of my blood for the preservation of India's freedom "

The tension was relieved We could breathe again freely.

Then each member of the Provisional Government came up in front of the vast Conference and individually took the Oath In the name of God, I take this holy oath that to liberate India and thirty-eight crores of my countrymen I will be absolutely faithful to our leader Subhas Chandra Bose and shall be always prepared to sacrifice my life and all I have for the cause,"

Proclamation ·

Netaji then read out the proclamation which would go down as an outstanding document in the future history of our country :—

"After their first defeat at the hands of the British in 1857 in Bengal, the Indian people fought an uninterrupted series of hard and bitter battles over a stretch of one hundred years The history of this period teems with examples of unparalleled heroism and self-sacrifice And in the pages of that history, the names of Siraj-ud-doula and Mohanlal of Bengal, Haider Ali, Tippu Sultan and Velu Thampi of South India, Appa Sahib Bhonsle and Peshwa Baji Rao of Maharastra, the Begums of Oudh, Sardar Shyam Singh Atariwala of Punjab, and last but not least Rani Laxmibai of Jhansi, Tantia Topi, Maharaj Kunwar Singh of Dumraon and Nana Sahib are for ever engraved in letters of gold Unfortunately for us, our forefathers did not at first realise that the British constituted a grave threat to the whole of India, and they did not therefore put up a united front against the enemy Ultimately, when the Indian people were roused to the reality of the situation they made a concerted move and under the flag of Bahadur Shah in 1857 they fought their last war as freemen

"Forcibly disarmed by the British after 1857 and subjected to terror and brutality, the Indian people lay prostrate for a while but with the birth of the Indian National Congress in 1885 there came a new awakening From 1885 till the end of the last World War the Indian people, in their lost liberty tried all possible methods—namely, agitation and propaganda, boycott of British goods, terrorism and sabotage, and finally armed revolution But all these efforts failed for a time. Ultimately in 1920 when the Indian people, haunted by a sense of failure, were groping for a new method, Mahatma Gandhi

came forward with the new weapon of non-co-operation and civil disobedience

Thus, the Indian people not only recovered their political consciousness, but became a political entity once again They could now speak with one voice and strive with one will for one common goal. From 1937 to 1939, through the work of the Congress Ministries in eight provinces, they gave proof of their capacity to adminster their own affairs Thus, on the eve of the present World War, the stage was set for the final struggle for India's liberation

Having goaded Indians to desperation by its hypocrisy and having driven them to starvation and death by plunder and loot, British rule in India has forfeited the good-will of the Indian people altogether and is now living a precarious existence It needs but a flame to destroy the last vestige of that unhappy rule To light that flame is the task of India's Army of Liberation

Now that the dawn of freedom is at hand, it is the duty of the Indian people to set up a Provisional Government of their own, and launch the last struggle under the banner of that Government But with all the Indian leaders in prison and the people at home totally disarmed, it is not possible to set up a Provisional Government within India or to launch an armed struggle under the aegis of that Government. It is therefore the duty of the Indian Independence League in East Asia supported by all patriotic Indians at home and abroad to undertake this task—the task of setting up a Provisional Government of Azad Hind (Free India), and of conducting the last fight for Freedom, with the help of the Azad Hind Fauj organised by the League.

The Provisional Government is entitled to, and hereby claims the allegiance of every Indian It guarantees religious liberty as well as equal rights and equal opportunities to all its citizens. It declares its firm resolve to pursue the happiness and prosperity of the whole nation and of all its parts, cherishing all the children of the nation equally and transcending all the differences cunningly fostered by an alien Government in the past

In the name of God, in the name of bygone generations who

have welded the Indian people into one nation, and in the name of the dead heroes who have bequeathed to us a tradition of heroism and self-sacrifice, we call upon the Indian people to rally round our banner and to strike for India's freedom. We call upon them to launch the final struggle against the British and their allies in India and to prosecute that struggle with valour and perseverence and with full faith in final Victory—until the enemy is expelled from Indian soil and the Indian people are once again a Free Nation"

This is signed on behalf of the Provisional Government of the Azad Hind by : Subhas Chandra Bose—Head of the State, Prime Minister and Minister for War and Foreign Affairs ; Capt. Mrs Lakshmi, Womens' Organisation ; S A. Ayer, Publicity and Propaganda , Lt Col. A. C Chatterji, Finance , Lt Col N. S Bhagat, Lt. Col. J K Bhonsle, Lt. Col. Gulzara Singh, Lt. Col M Z. Kiani, Lt. Col. A. D. Loganadhan, Lt. Col Ehsan Qadir, Lt Col. Shah Nawaz representatives of the Armed Forces ; A M. Sahay, Secretary with ministerial rank ; Rash Behari Bose, Supreme Advisor ; Karim Gani, Debnath Das, D. M. Khan, Y Yellappa, J. Thivy, Sardar Ishar Singh—Advisors, A N. Sarkar—Legal Advisor

Declaration ·

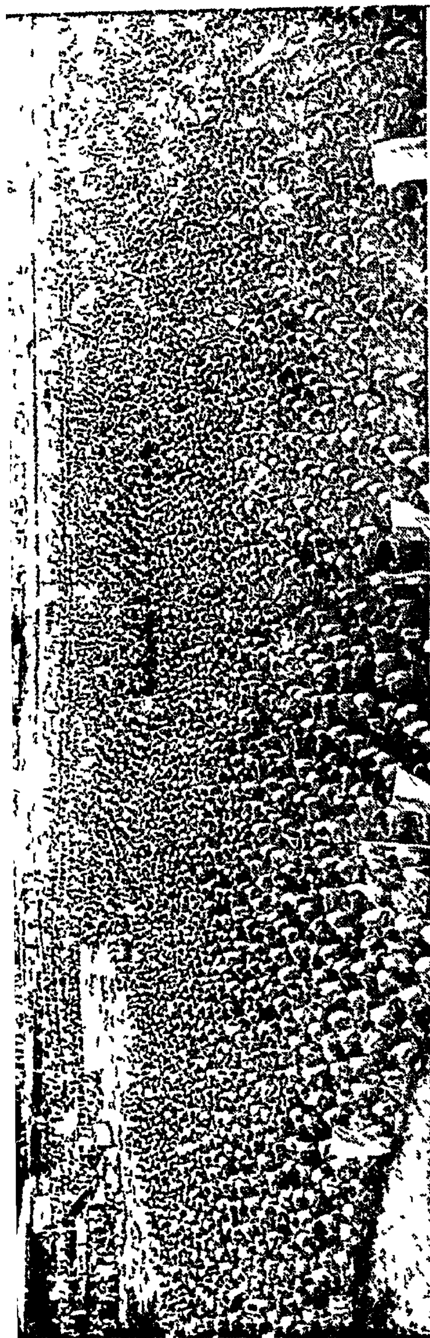
Declaration of war by the Provisional Government of Azad Hind on Britain and U. S A. On October the 25th 1943 in the presence of a huge mass rally of Indian civilians and the A. H. F assembled in front of the Municipal Buildings, Singapore, Netaji read out the following declaration ·—

The second meeting of the Counsel of Ministers has unanimously passed the following resolution at 5 minutes past mid-night .

"The Provisional Government of Azad Hind declares war on Britain and the U. S. A." As soon as this was declared shouts and slogans rent the skies and volley after volley of frenzied cheering greeted the news. For a full quarter of an hour the vast audience of over fifty thousand was uncontrollable. It broke the cordon in several places, trying to reach the platform. When Netaji asked them to stand where they were and raise their hands to express their

approval a forest of hands went up. Then the Fauj soldiers lifted their rifles and placed them on their shoulders, giving their consent by a forest of bayonets It was a scene which I shall never forget I saw some ladies of the Rani of Jhansi who had fainted through over enthusiasm They were lying unconscious on the ground and with clinched fists were repeating our battle cry 'Chalo Delhi, Chalo Delhi'.

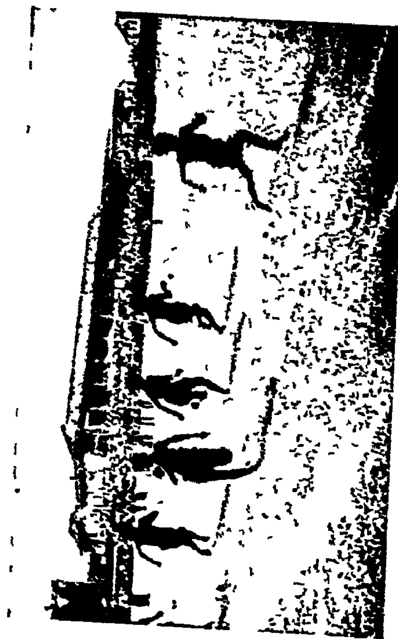




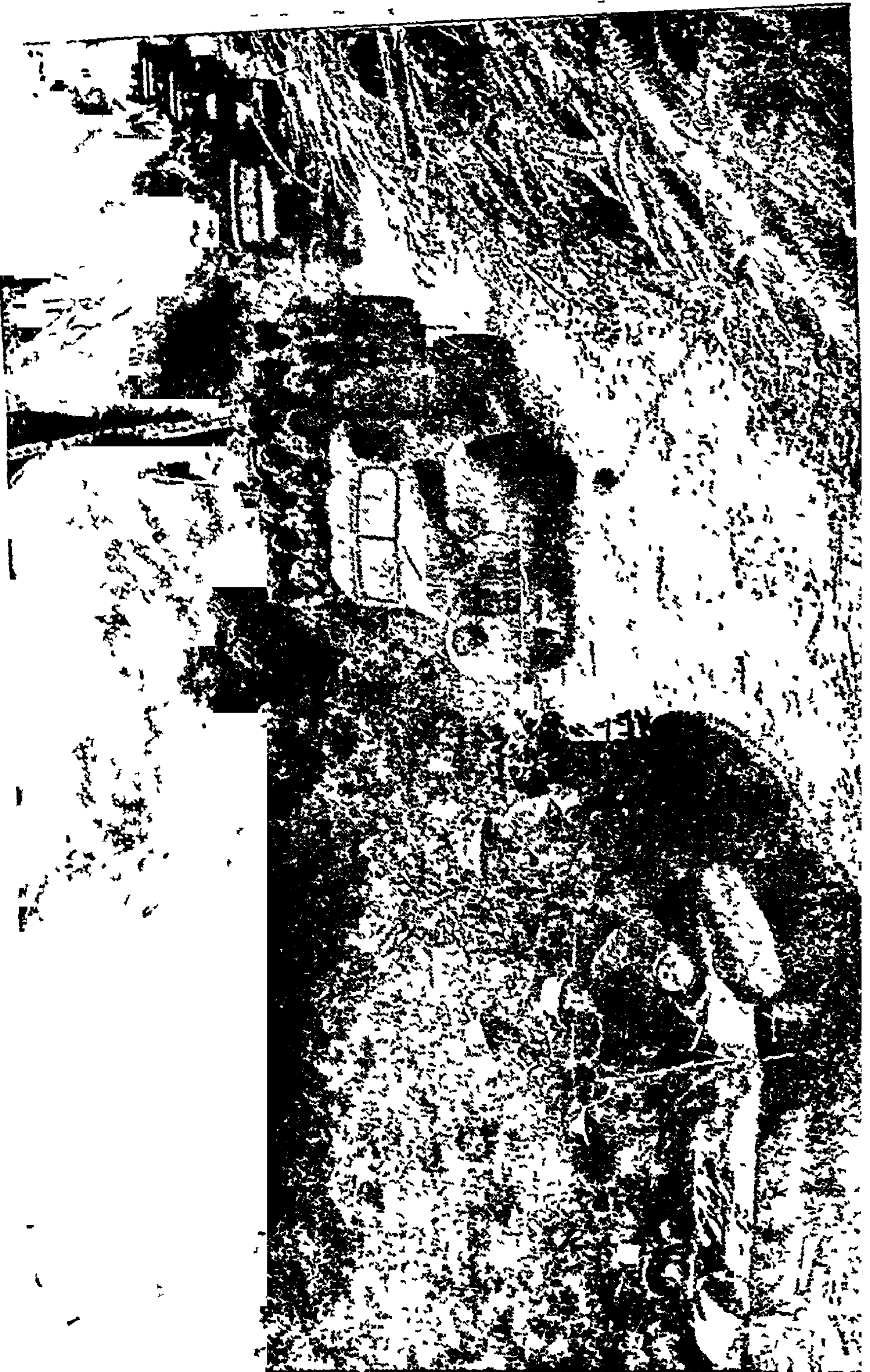


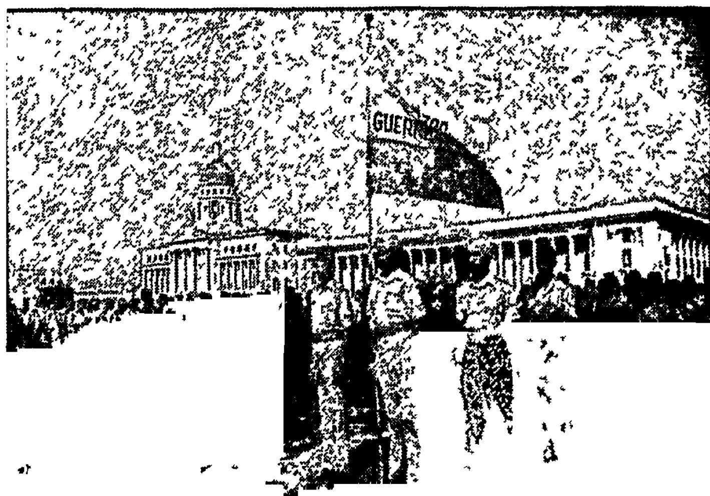






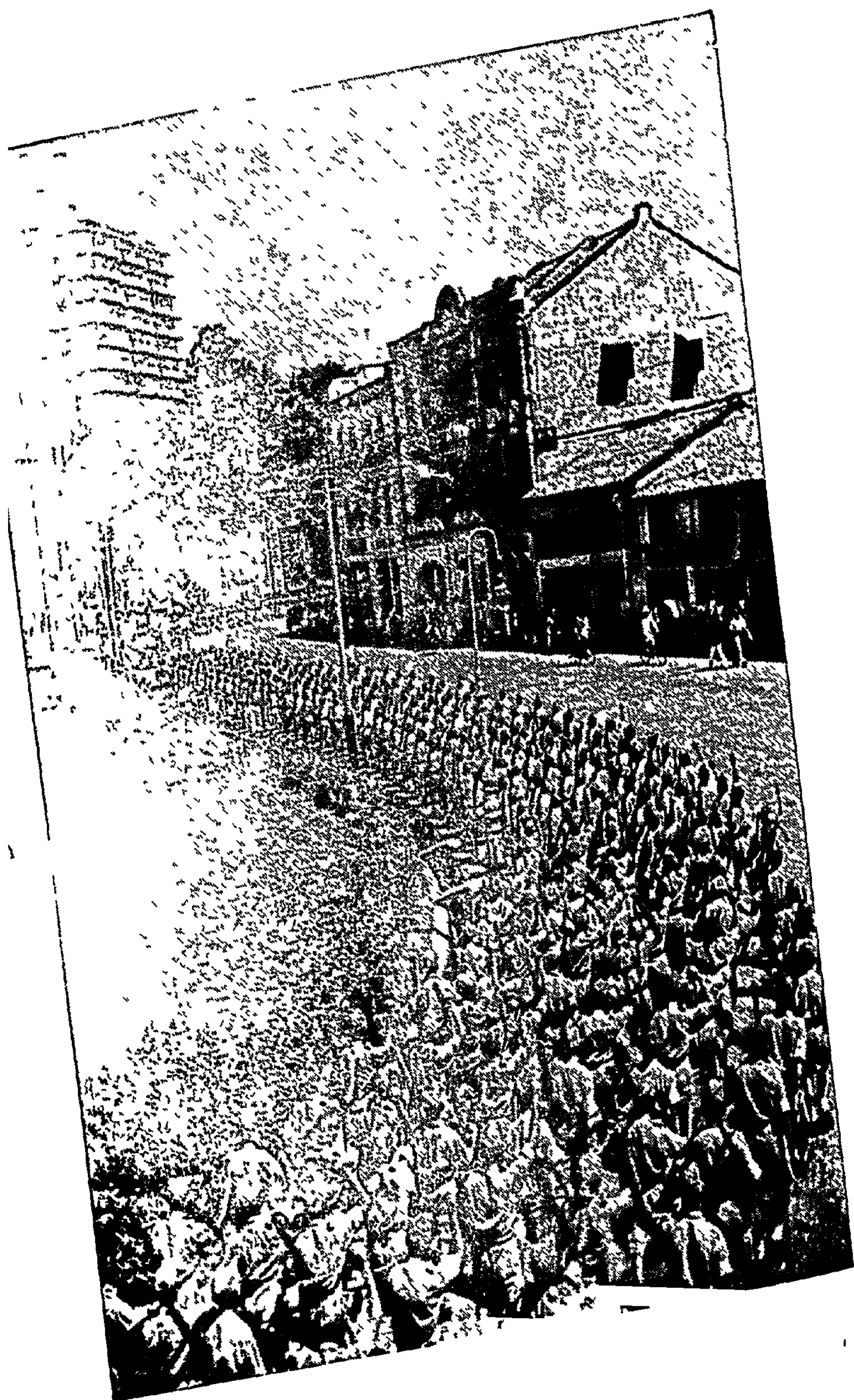


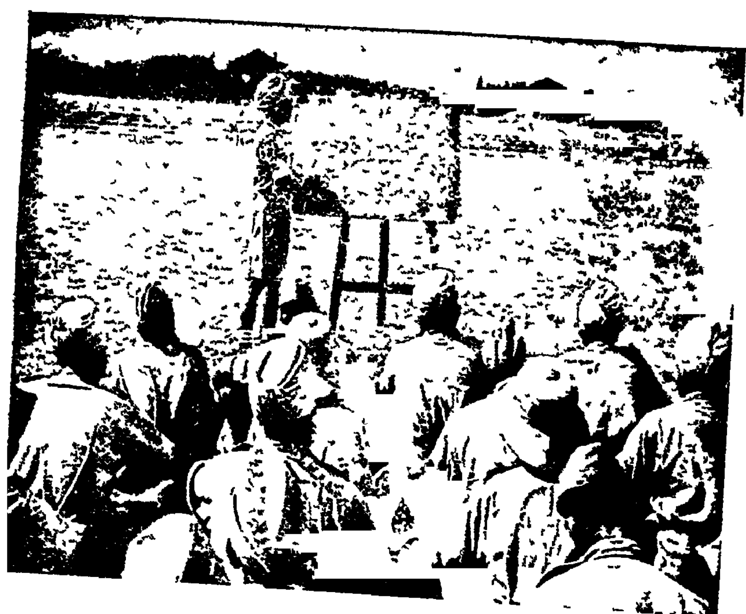




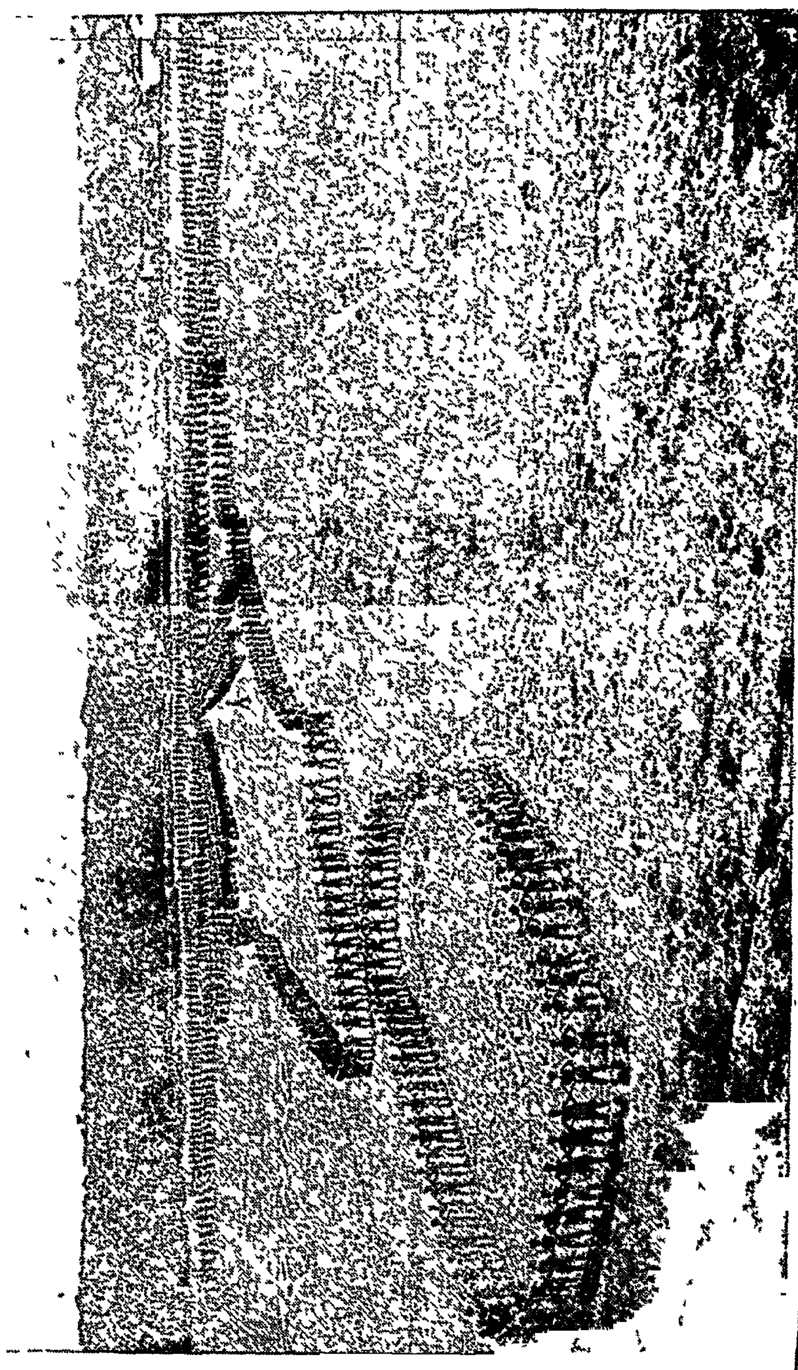
















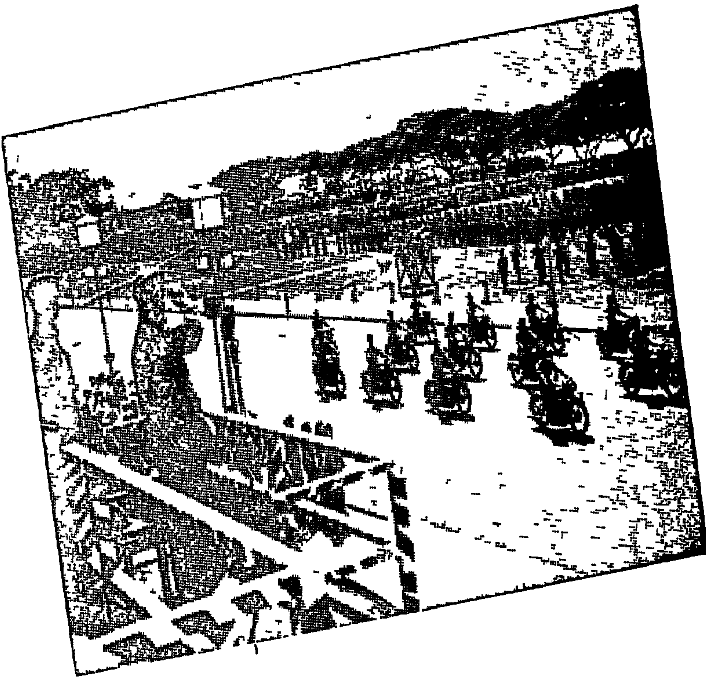
Gen. 'M. Z. Kiani



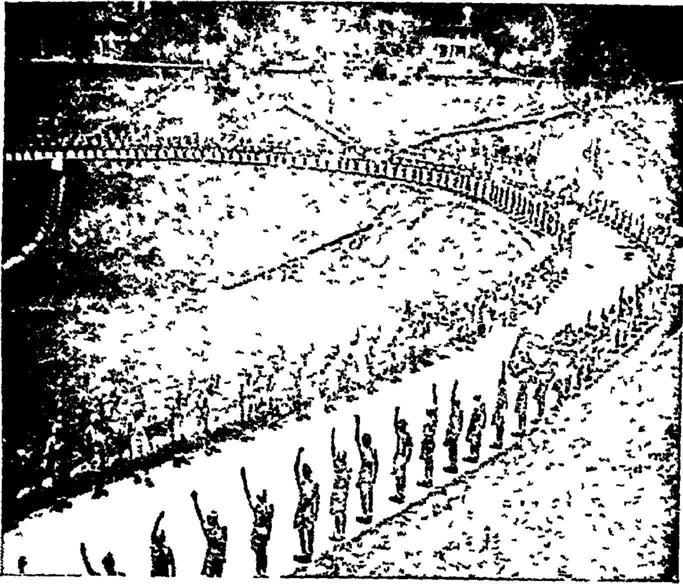


Gen Bhonsle





Capt MEHAR CHAND, Col GULZARA SINGH, Capt. GURBAKHSH SINGH.

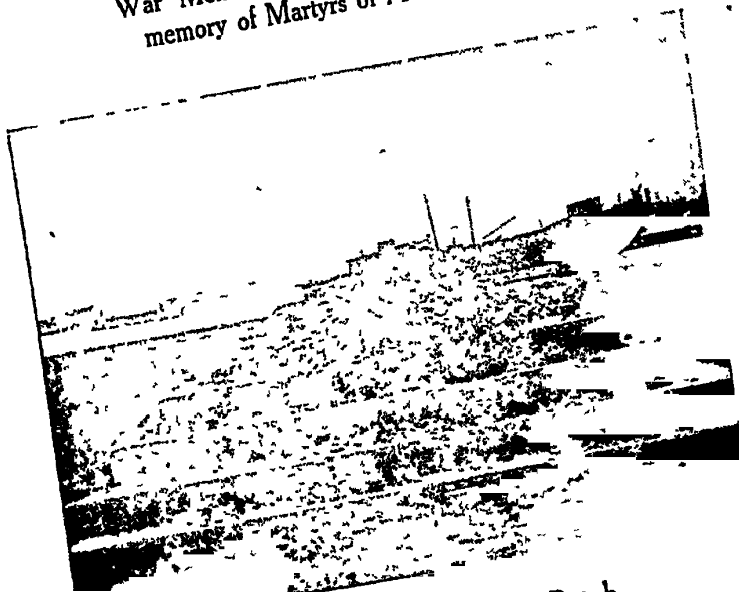




Aziz Ahmad (sitting), Col Habibur Rehman, Maj M A Khan, Col Jehangir,



War Memorial erected in Singapore memory of Martyrs of A H Fauj



As seen after demolished by the British.